



# Two Years In: Consumer Sentiment on COVID Care, Policy & More

*An eHealth Survey*

January 2022

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## **Introduction**

**With the advent of the omicron variant, the Supreme Court's recent decision on the Biden administration's vaccine mandates, and the challenges besetting our national testing infrastructure, COVID-19 is still top of mind for many Americans.**

**eHealth has been surveying consumers on their concerns and opinions about the COVID crisis since March of 2020. Two years into the pandemic, this survey invites consumers to reflect once more on the government's response, on the recommendations of medical authorities, and on their own personal experiences.**

**What comes next in the pandemic is anyone's guess, but the findings presented here – based on more than 1,000 responses from a general population audience – suggest that while the politics of the pandemic are more contentious than ever, Americans in general may be ready to turn the page and start a fresh chapter.**

**Refer to the Analysis & Highlights below for an executive summary of our findings, and to the Methodology note at the end for additional information on the data provided in this report.**

## Analysis & Highlights

### Many consumers express decreasing confidence in the government's response to COVID-19, and many appear to be tiring of the focus on vaccination:

- 38% of respondents say their confidence in the government's response to COVID has decreased in the past year, while 26% say their confidence has increased.
- 48% say they disapprove of the government's handling of the omicron variant.
- Fewer than half (47%) say they would comply with open-ended COVID booster recommendations from government or medical authorities.
- 45% think it's time for the authorities to shift their focus away from vaccines and toward treatments for COVID.

### The intersection of politics and COVID is even more fraught today than it was at the time of the 2020 presidential election:

- If elections were held today, 78% say the government's handling of the COVID crisis would be among their top three priorities, compared to only 46% in November of 2020.
- 64% of Republicans and 44% independents say their confidence in the government's handling of the pandemic has decreased in the past year,

compared to only 18% of Democrats.

- 72% of Democrats say they would comply with an open-ended regimen of COVID boosters, compared to only 21% of Republicans and 36% of independents.

### Many report that they've experienced challenges when it comes to getting COVID tests:

- 29% of respondents say they've had difficulty getting COVID tests in the past 6 months; among those who have contracted the virus, that figure is 47%.
- 25% say they have skipped getting tested because it was hard for them to find testing options.
- 45% of respondents from New York state have had difficulty getting COVID tests in the past 6 months, compared to only 12% of those from Georgia.

### More consumers are concerned about access to non-COVID medical care than about catching the COVID omicron variant:

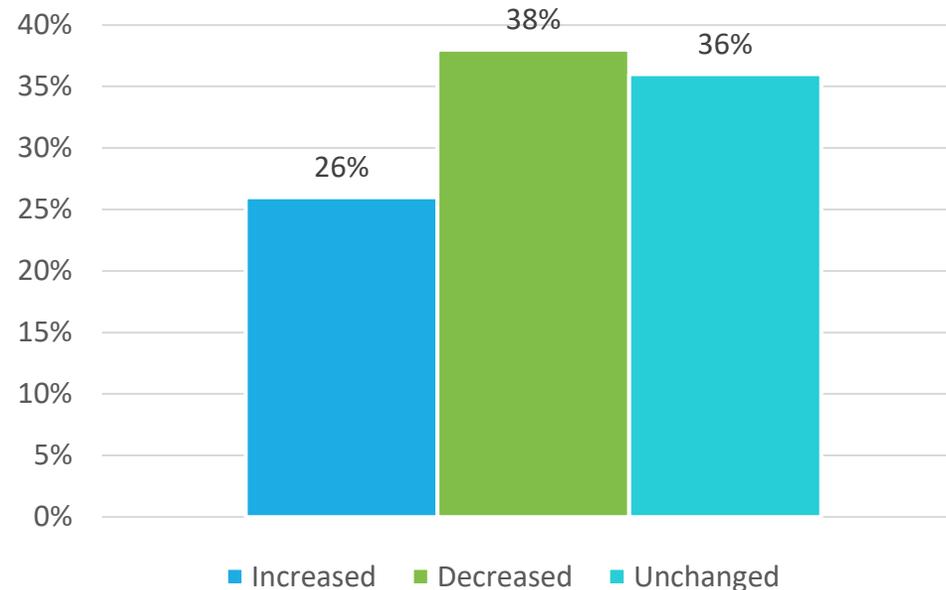
- 78% express concern about not having access to medical care for non-COVID needs, while 74% express concern about contracting the omicron variant.

## The Government's COVID-19 Response

### Consumers are most likely to say their confidence in the government response to COVID-19 has decreased

- About a quarter (26%) of respondents say their confidence in the government's handling of the pandemic has increased over the past year.
- However, more than a third (38%) say their confidence in government has decreased.
- 36% say their level of confidence has remained the same.

“Compared to January 2021, has your approval of the government's handling of the pandemic increased or decreased?”



### Republicans and independent voters are most likely to express decreased approval

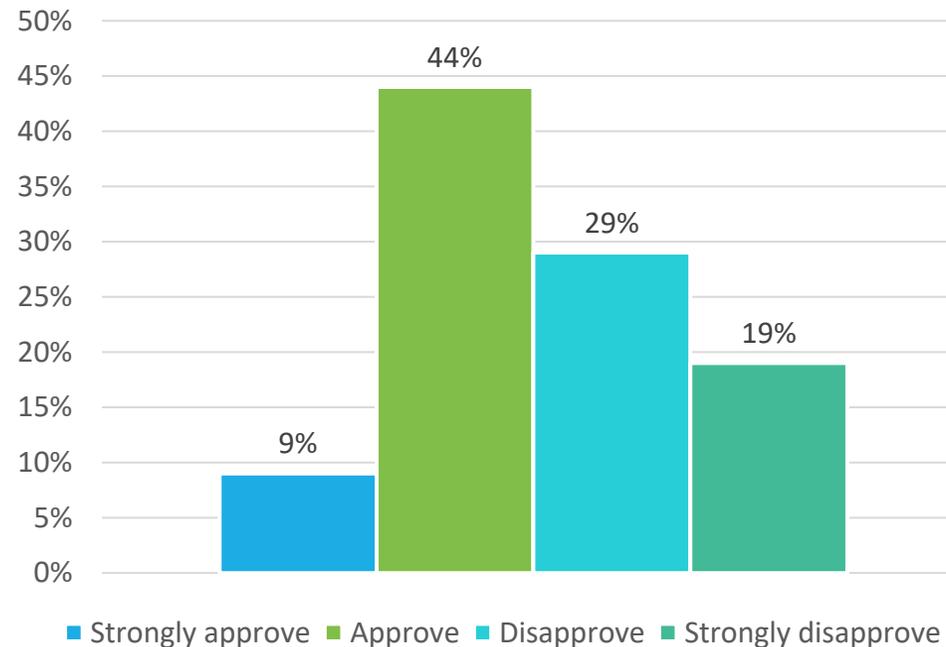
- 64% of Republicans and 44% of independents say their confidence in the government response has decreased since last year, compared to only 18% of Democrats.
- 57% of the unvaccinated say their approval of the government's handling of COVID has decreased, compared to 33% of the vaccinated.
- 44% of those who have had COVID-19 say their approval has decreased, compared to 35% of those who have not contracted the virus.

## The Government's COVID-19 Response (cont.)

### Consumers are divided over their approval of the government's handling of omicron

- A slim majority (53%) express approval for how the government has handled the omicron variant.
- However, nearly half (48%) express disapproval.
- Respondents were twice as likely to say they “strongly disapprove” than “strongly approve” of how the omicron variant has been handled.

“Do you approve or disapprove of the government’s response to the omicron variant?”



### Young adults and “red” state respondents are less likely to approve of government response

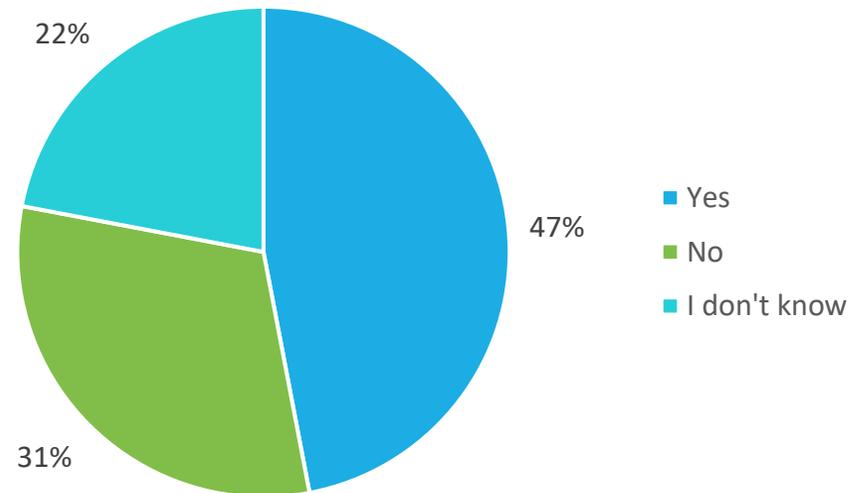
- Young adults aged 25 to 34 were most likely to express disapproval (55%) of the government’s omicron response; 42% of those in this age band report having had COVID.
- Adults aged 75 to 84 were most likely to express approval (70%) of the government’s response to omicron.
- 65% of California and 61% of Illinois respondents express approval of the omicron response, compared to 46% of those from Texas and 35% of those from Tennessee.

## The Government's COVID-19 Response (cont.)

### Many reject or are skeptical of open-ended COVID booster shot regimens

- 47% say they would willingly get COVID booster shots multiple times per year into the future, if it were recommended.
- 31% say they would not comply with an open-ended booster shot regimen.
- 22% are unsure.

“If it were recommended by government or medical authorities, would you get COVID-19 booster shots multiple times per year indefinitely?”



### Democrats and the elderly are most likely to comply with multiple COVID booster recommendations

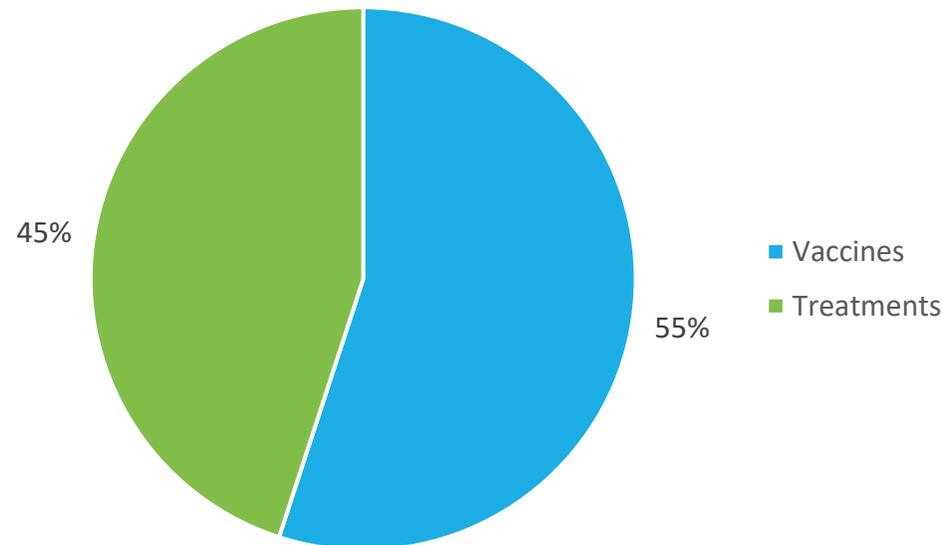
- 72% of Democrats say they would comply with an open-ended COVID booster regimen, compared to only 21% of Republicans and 36% of independents.
- 76% of people aged 75 to 84 would comply with an open-ended booster regimen, compared to only 41% of people aged 25 to 44.
- Only 21% of those who have not yet had a COVID booster shot say they would willingly get multiple booster shots per year.

## The Government's COVID-19 Response (cont.)

### Many think more emphasis should be placed on COVID treatments than on vaccines

- 55% continue to support government and medical authorities' focus on vaccines in response to the COVID pandemic.
- However, 45% think it's time to shift focus more toward treatments and away from vaccines.

“At this point, should authorities put more emphasis on vaccines or on treatments for COVID-19?”



### Democrats and men most likely to favor continued focus on vaccines vs. treatment

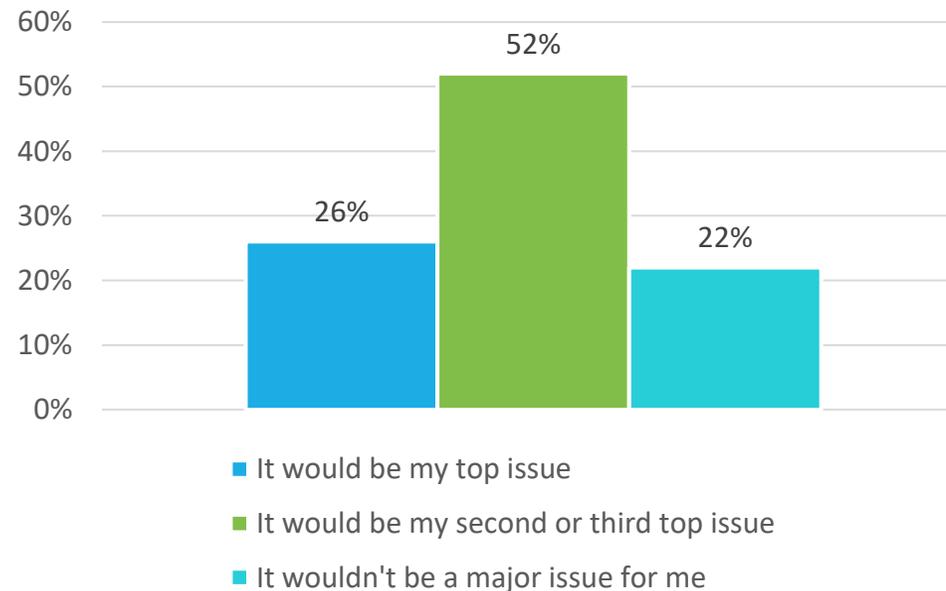
- 78% of Democrats still favor a focus on vaccines, while 69% of Republicans want more emphasis on treatments; independent voters are about evenly split.
- 61% of men think authorities should continue to focus on vaccines, compared to 50% of women.
- Among those who have had COVID, a majority (53%) favor a focus on treatments, compared to 38% of those who have not yet contract the virus.

## The Government's COVID-19 Response (cont.)

78% say the government's COVID response would be a top-three issue at the ballot box

- 26% say the government's COVID response would be their #1 issue if they were voting today.
- An additional 52% say it would be their second or third top issue.
- In November 2020, only 46% of respondents told eHealth that COVID was a top-three voting issue for them.\*

“If elections were held today, how much would your feelings about the government's handling of COVID-19 impact your vote?”



The handling of the COVID crisis is a major issue for voters regardless of party

- Strong majorities of Republicans (79%), Democrats (79%) and Independents (77%) say the government's handling of COVID is a top-three issue when it comes to voting.
- 35% of those aged 45 to 54 say the government's handling of pandemic would be their #1 voting issue, compared to 13% of those aged 75 to 84.

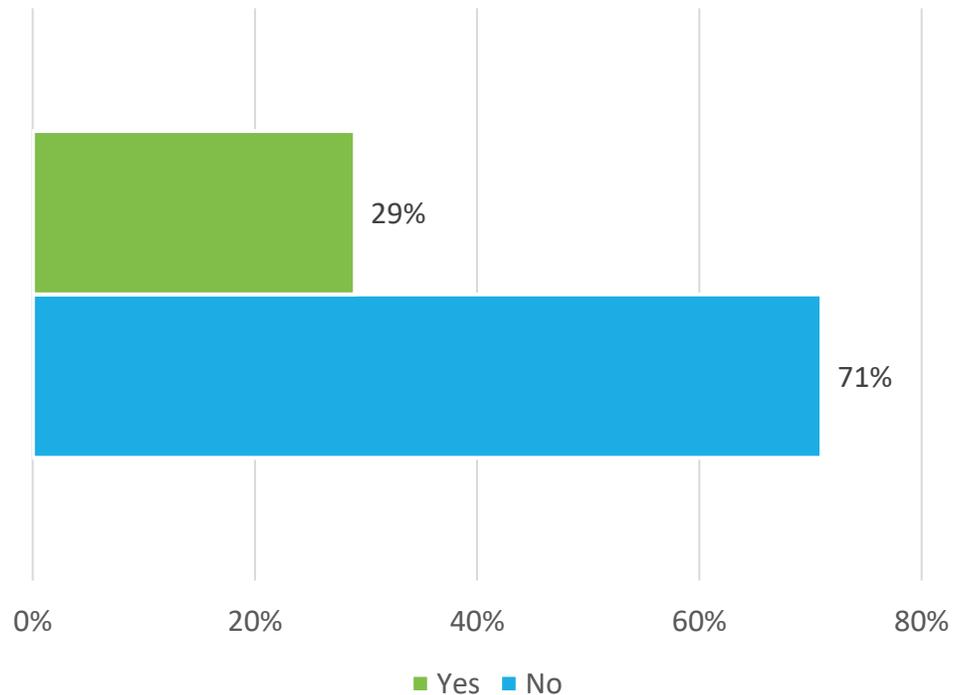
\* See eHealth's [Health Insurance Consumers on Coronavirus and the ACA survey](#).

## COVID-19 Testing

### Nearly three in ten have had difficulty accessing COVID tests

- 29% of respondents say they've had a hard time getting COVID tests in the past six months.
- 71% have not had trouble accessing tests.

“Have you had difficulty accessing a COVID-19 test in the past 6 months?”



### Nearly half of those who contracted COVID faced challenges with testing; access varies by state

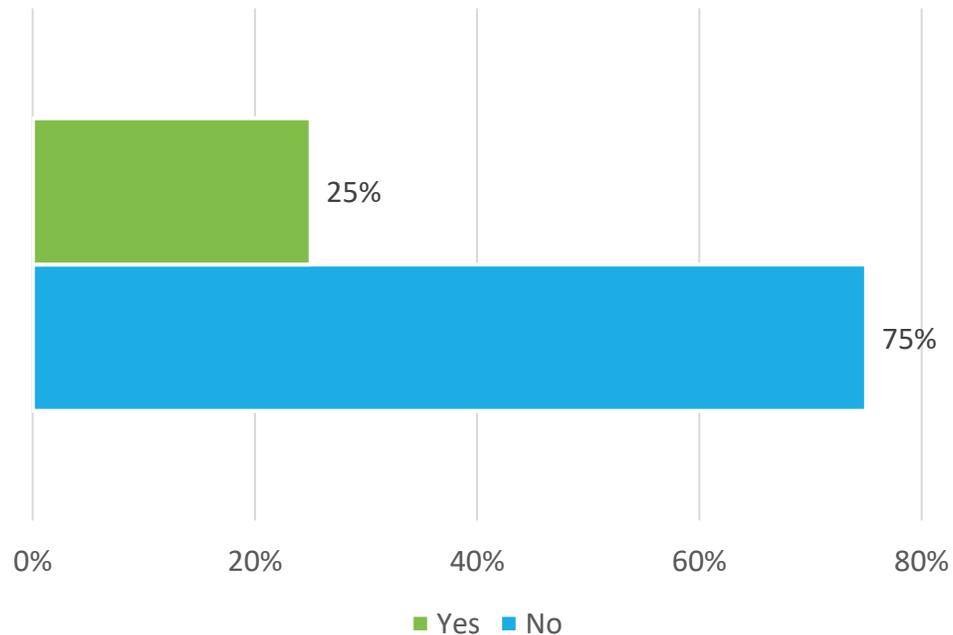
- 47% of those who have had COVID say they've had difficulty accessing tests in the past 6 months.
- 45% of respondents from New York and 43% from Illinois have had difficulty accessing tests in the past six months, compared to 15% of those in Oregon and 12% of those in Georgia.

## COVID-19 Testing (cont.)

A quarter have skipped COVID testing due to lack of testing options in their area

- 25% of respondents say they have skipped getting tested for COVID because they couldn't find a testing option.
- 75% have not skipped COVID testing.

“Have you skipped getting a COVID-19 test because testing options weren't available?”



Some report difficulty obtaining coverage for COVID tests

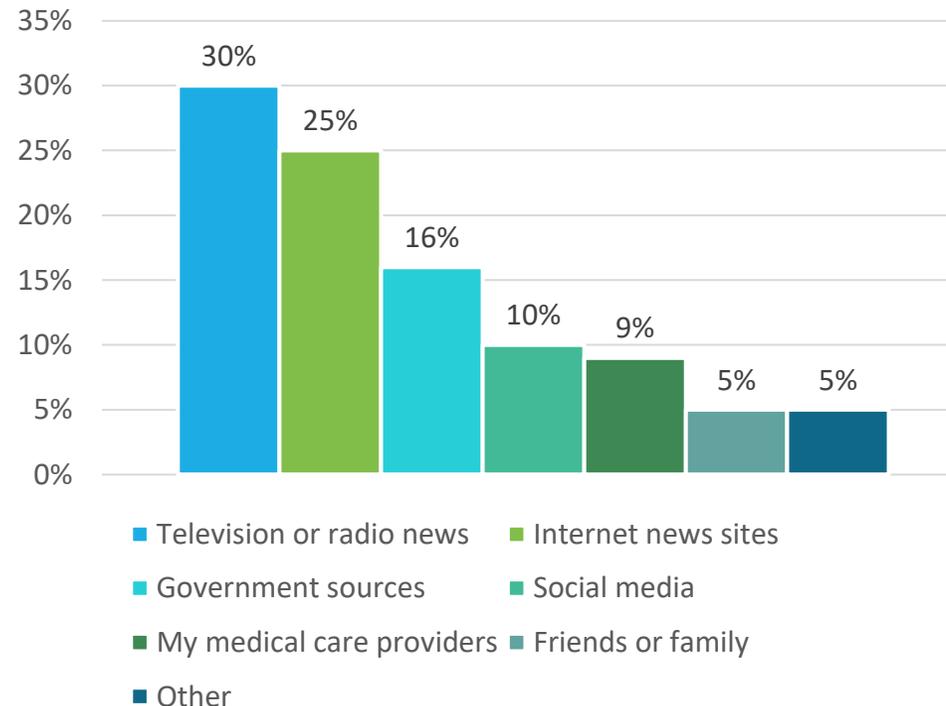
- 15% of respondents say they have had trouble getting coverage or obtaining reimbursement for the cost of COVID tests.

## Where Consumers Get COVID-19 Information

### Television, radio and internet news sites are where most get their information about COVID

- 30% say they get most of their COVID information through television or radio news.
- 25% get their information primarily from internet news sites.
- 16% get their information primarily from government sources.
- 10% get their information primarily through social media.
- 9% get their information primarily from their medical care providers.

“Where do you get most of your information about COVID-19?”



### Politics and age influence where people get their information about COVID

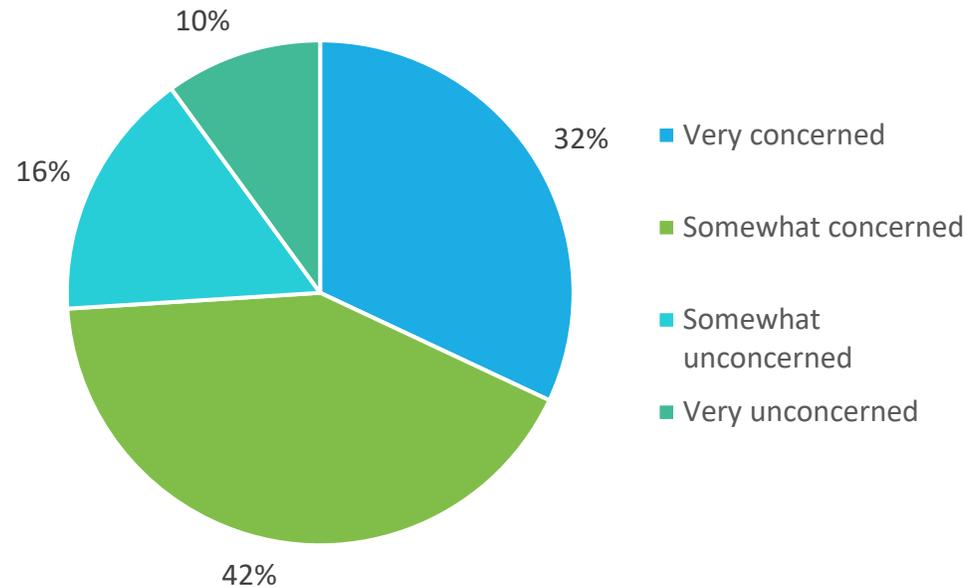
- 14% of Republicans get most of their COVID information from their doctor, compared to 6% of Democrats.
- 24% of Democrats get most of their information about COVID from government sources, compared to 9% of Republicans.
- The age 25 to 34 cohort were more likely than other groups to get their information primarily from social media (17%), while those aged 65 to 74 were most likely to get their information primarily from TV or radio (45%).

## Other Concerns

More than seven in ten express concern about getting the omicron variant of COVID-19

- 32% say they are very concerned about contracting omicron variant.
- 42% say they are “somewhat concerned” about getting it.
- About a quarter (26%) say they are not concerned about getting omicron.

“How concerned are you about getting the omicron COVID variant?”



Adult care givers are more concerned than parents of children

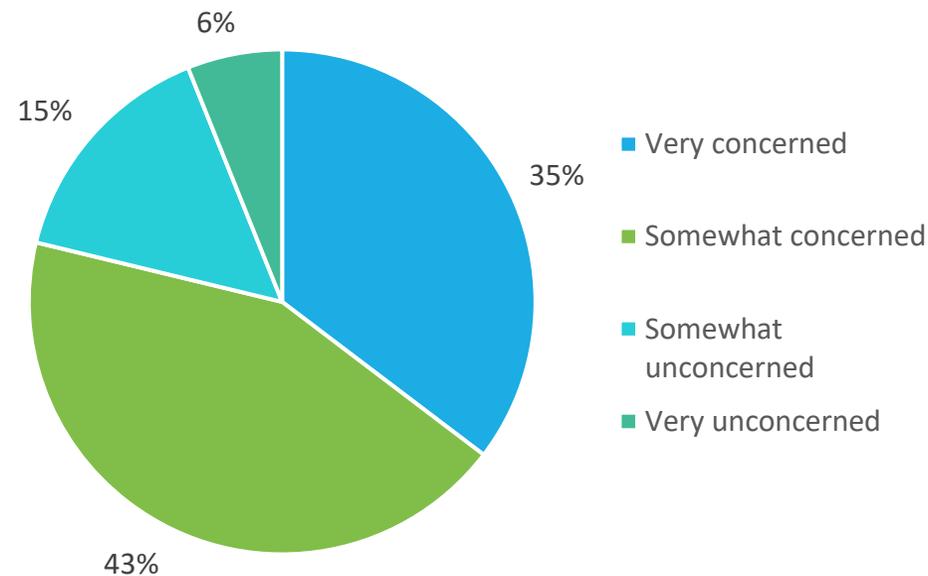
- 47% of care givers who provide care for an adult say they are “very concerned” about contracting the omicron variant, compared to only 26% of those who provide care for children.

## Other Concerns (cont.)

With some hospitals understaffed or overwhelmed, many fear lack of access to non-COVID care

- More than 75% say they are concerned about having access to non-COVID medical care; of these, 35% are “very concerned” and an additional 43% are “somewhat concerned.”
- 21% are not concerned about access to non-COVID medical care.

“How concerned are you about having access to medical care for non-COVID emergencies?”



Adult care givers express higher concern about access to non-COVID care

- 49% of care givers who provide care for an adult are “very concerned” about not having access to non-COVID medical care, compared to only 32% of those who care for children.
- In general, age was not a major factor in concern for access to non-COVID care.

## Methodology Note

The findings presented in this report are based on a general population survey conducted in January of 2022. A total of 1,077 responses were collected. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest full percentage point and may add to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding. For the purposes of the survey, party affiliation of respondents is based on survey participants voluntarily identifying themselves as more likely to vote for candidates from either the Democratic or Republican parties; those identifying themselves as equally likely to vote for candidates of either major party are classified for the purposes of this report as independents.

## About eHealth

eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH) operates a leading health insurance marketplace at [eHealth.com](http://eHealth.com) and [eHealthMedicare.com](http://eHealthMedicare.com) with technology that provides consumers with health insurance enrollment solutions. Since 1997, we have connected more than 8 million members with quality, affordable health insurance, Medicare options, and ancillary plans. Our proprietary marketplace offers Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement, Medicare Part D prescription drug, individual, family, small business and other plans from over 200 health insurance carriers across fifty states and the District of Columbia.