

California Insights Review Series

Healthcare



Executive Summary

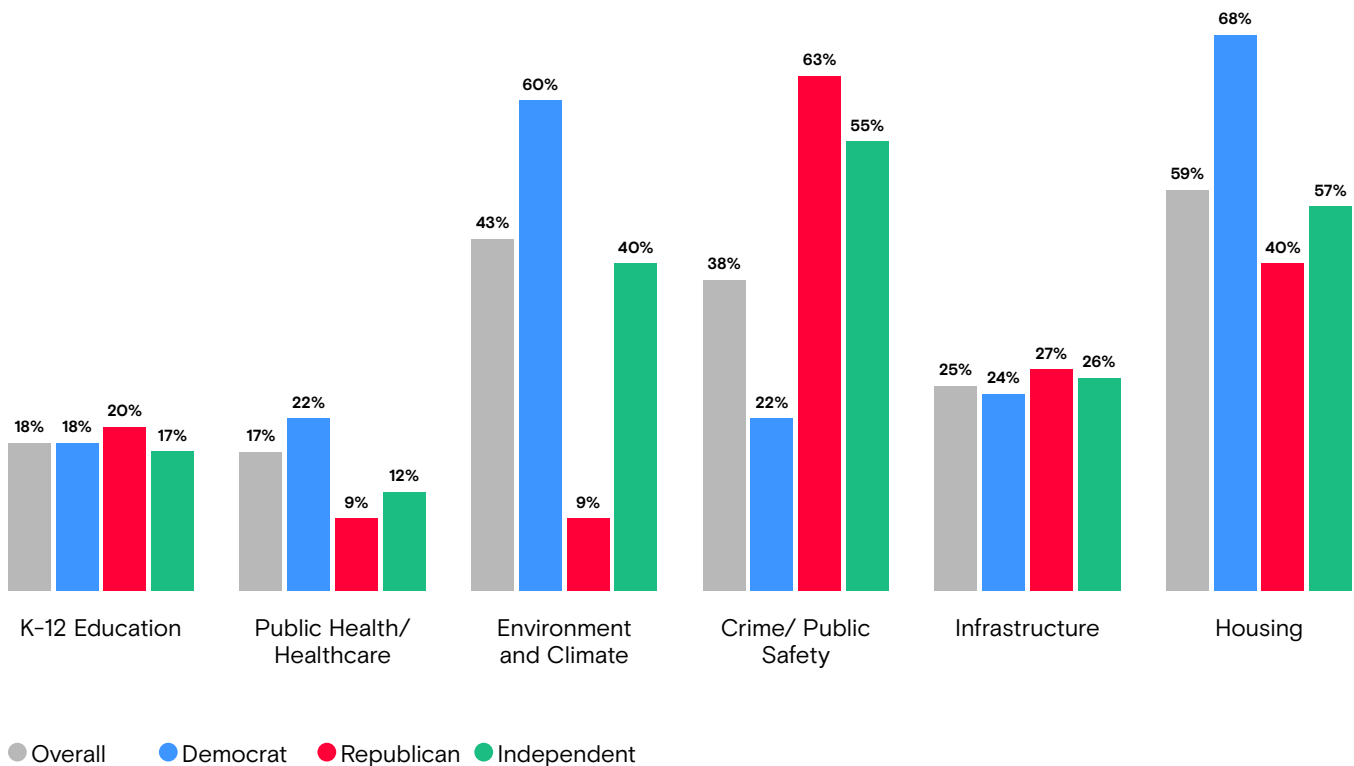
We are excited to share our findings from our fourth annual California Insights Review. From April to July 2022, we interviewed over 371 policymakers in California to gain a deeper understanding of the policy priorities for the state and what the private sector is doing to engage with the identified challenges.

Along with issues such as housing, the environment, and infrastructure, one of the most significant challenges for California is healthcare.

Policymakers want to see increased affordability, improved healthcare infrastructure, solutions to the health worker labor shortage, and equitable access for communities across the state.

This report is the fifth and final in a series that examines California policymakers' top policy priorities of 2022. This review examines Healthcare in the state.

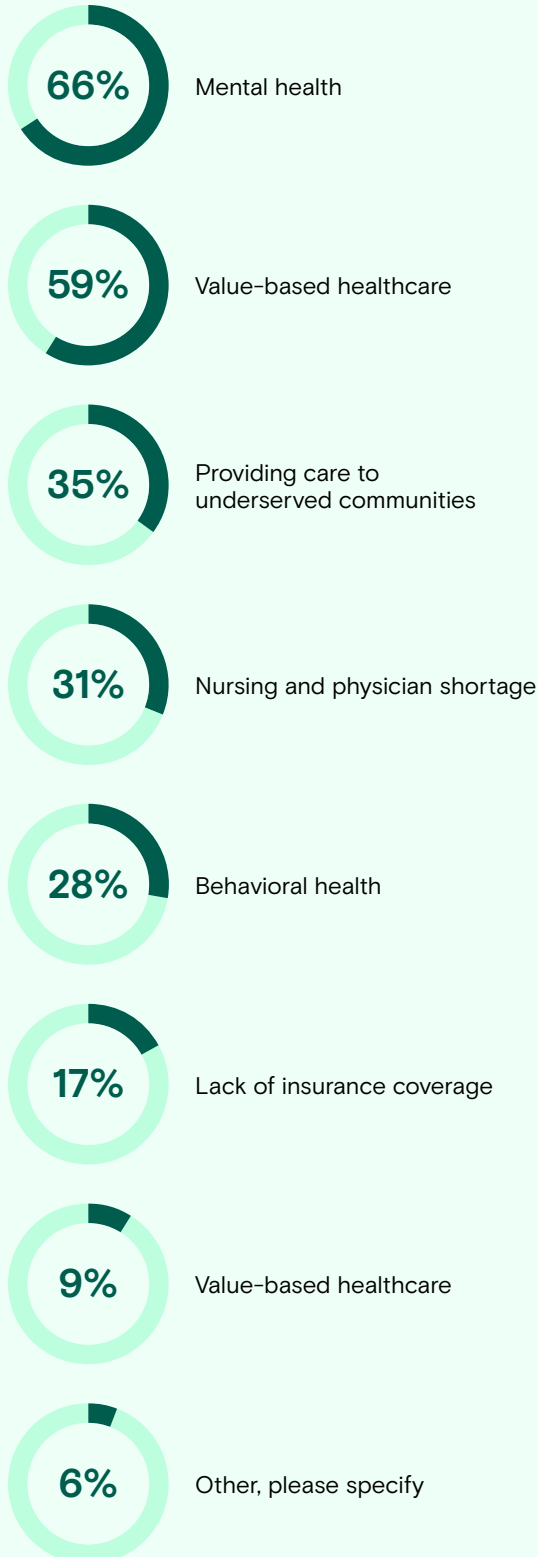
Which of the following do you view as the most pressing issues facing the state?



Qualitative n=49, Quantitative n=322

Top Healthcare Issues for California Policymakers

n=317



California Deep Dive

Healthcare

For years, healthcare costs in California have been rising and decision-makers in the state have been battling to rein in on costs.¹ Our survey results also show that policymakers are concerned about the state of healthcare, with respondents highlighting several issues such as affordability, lack of infrastructure, labor shortages, and health equity to be top concerns for the state. Policymakers also explain the myriad of challenges they see within the healthcare industry in the state.



The cost of healthcare is a major problem that we're hearing and just good access to the service itself.

Supervisor, Municipal, D



The most pressing issue is the infrastructure of hospitals - there are not enough hospitals to serve the public. And it doesn't have to be hospitals. It can also be clinics. **With a growing population, your healthcare system has to grow in parallel.**

Councilmember, Municipal, R



We have far too many uninsured people who don't have access to healthcare...

District Attorney, Municipal, D



I think the quality of healthcare has actually gone down due to the fact that hospitals are doing everything they can to keep their costs down.

Councilmember, Municipal, R



We're going to need to work collaboratively with agencies, nonprofits, and so forth to provide the services, food, and ongoing mental health drug treatment for years to come because a lot of these folks are living in these conditions for decades, and it's not going to—we're not going to fix it overnight.

Chief of Staff, Legislative, D



I don't know if health insurance companies have the finances to really deal with mental health the way it should be dealt with. **I think it might have to be a partnership between the government and maybe health insurance companies to work together on the mental health issue.**

Councilmember, Municipal, R



There's understaffing everywhere, from nursing, to dental services, to phlebotomists – it's not just doctors and nurses. It's all of those.

Councilmember, Municipal, R

Fair Access to Healthcare

Health equity in the state is a concern for California policymakers, with several decision-makers detailing the disparities in access for lower income communities. Additionally, policymakers believe that public-private collaboration could be helpful to address access inequities.



It's important to have health equity. Because when you have health equity, that means the financial crisis that is occurring in hospitals won't occur. When you have insurance or you are healthy, you're not at the clinics or the hospital as frequently as someone who is not.

Councilmember, Municipal, R



There are a great deal of minority communities who might be falling under the lower economic side of the scale. And **[the healthcare industry] should be, I would hope, studying which communities they're serving, maybe which communities could be benefited if they were looked at closer and addressed accordingly.**

Mayor Pro Tempore, Municipal, D



Equity access is a pressing policy issue. I think if we've gotten anything from the last few years it's been that everything has to be looked at through the equity lens and that includes healthcare and access to healthcare.

Mayor, Municipal, R



I think that staying on the mission of these businesses, **there could be some kind of investment in people that don't have the means to pay the full price for healthcare.** So people who are below poverty level or something, to give them healthcare, and provide them healthcare in a respectful and meaningful way. **We don't want to wait till people are dying on the street to offer healthcare.**

District Attorney, Municipal, D

Perceptions of the Private Healthcare Industry

Policymakers across party lines express numerous concerns in their perceptions of the private healthcare industry and their roles in ensuring affordable and equitable healthcare access.



I would say my views of the healthcare industry are not entirely positive. I feel like **too often they are in the place of trying to stop folks from having access rather than engaging with them and helping them use the tools that they have.**

Legislative Director, Legislative, D



I don't think their [the health industry] outreach within the community is strong enough. I think there needs to be a stronger partnership with the local governments with both their health and social services, community services, their senior centers, and senior programs. I think they could be a little more active in those areas.

Supervisor, Municipal, D



Hospitals are tough because they are total price gougers... I have a feeling that the profit margins for hospitals are higher than for other segments of the healthcare industry.

Vice President of Communications, Municipal, R

Conclusion

California policymakers detail several health policy challenges such as the rising cost of healthcare, mental health, health equity concerns, and labor shortages. Furthermore, policymakers - **19 percent** - support public-private collaboration as a solution to lowering the cost of healthcare and improving equitable access for under-resourced communities in the state.

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Citations

1. <https://calmatters.org/health/2022/07/rising-health-care-costs/>

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