



Hospital Safety and Staffing **Consumer Survey Report**

Real-world insights based on U.S. consumer perceptions of hospital safety, concerns with acute care settings and steps they believe could improve visits for patients and others.



INTRODUCTION

U.S. health systems and hospitals are coming out of the worst financial year since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, facing 2023 with razor thin margins and losing more procedural volumes and revenues to ambulatory surgery centers and outpatient operating rooms.^{1,2}

As with any industry, it is important for hospital leaders to understand customer perceptions and motivating behaviors in today's economic climate where patients—and payers—demand higher quality at a lower cost.

The results of a survey of 2,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older, commissioned by GHX and fielded by Regina Corso Consulting in November 2022, reveal insights into consumer sentiment around the hospital experience.

The survey findings point to concerns among Americans with regards to hospital staffing shortages, security and quality of care. Patients are increasingly turning to non-acute care sites as an alternative to hospitals, particularly when faced with the need for emergency services.

The intention of this report is to provide hospital leaders real-world insights based on U.S. consumers' perceptions of hospital safety, drivers behind their concerns with acute care settings and steps they believe hospitals could take to improve visits for patients and others.

4 KEY SURVEY FINDINGS*

Here are four key findings from the survey, expanded upon and backed with supporting data in this report:

- 1 Hospital staffing shortages among top concerns**
- 2 Indications of concerns about hospital safety**
- 3 Urgent care centers preferred over hospital ERs**
- 4 Consumers call for more staff and greater security in hospital settings**

*The appendix in this report includes the survey results, including a deep dive into the data with insights related to income, gender and differing perceptions between those who had received care or visited a hospital in the past year and those who hadn't.

¹National Hospital Flash Report, Kaufman Hall, March 2023, <https://www.kaufmanhall.com/insights/research-report/national-hospital-flash-report-march-2023>

²National Hospital Flash Report, Kaufman Hall, January 2023, <https://www.kaufmanhall.com/insights/research-report/national-hospital-flash-report-january-2023>

METHODOLOGY

The survey collected responses from 2,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older and delivered demographic insights related to income, gender, and differing perceptions between those who had received care or visited a hospital in the last year and those who hadn't. Survey respondents are balanced in an attempt to be representative of the U.S. collectively based on 2020 Census data.

Notes for reading charts and tables – percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding or because the question was a multiple response allowed item. Unless otherwise indicated, bases for all charts are of the total of 2,000 American adults.

ABOUT GHX

Building on decades of collaboration among providers, manufacturers, distributors and other industry stakeholders, Global Healthcare Exchange, LLC (GHX) is leading the charge in helping organizations run the new business of healthcare. By helping automate key business processes and translating evidence-based analytics and data into meaningful action, GHX is helping the healthcare ecosystem to move faster, operate more intelligently, and achieve greater outcomes.

For more information on GHX's suite of cloud-based supply chain solutions, visit www.ghx.com.

» To learn more about the Vendormate kiosk for visitor and vendor badging and infection control [click here](#)

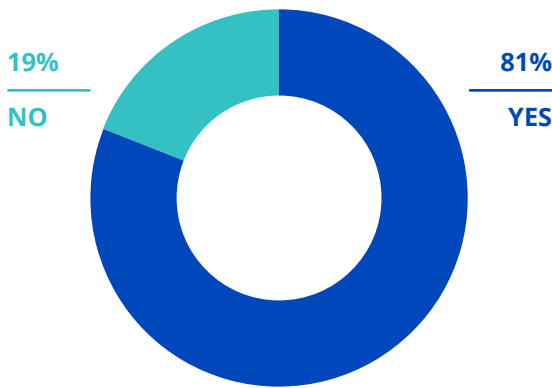


Hospital staffing shortages top the list of concerns

Hospital leaders know first-hand the challenges of chronic nurse shortages and other staffing vacancies. But does this issue come into play with consumers when considering a site for care?

81%

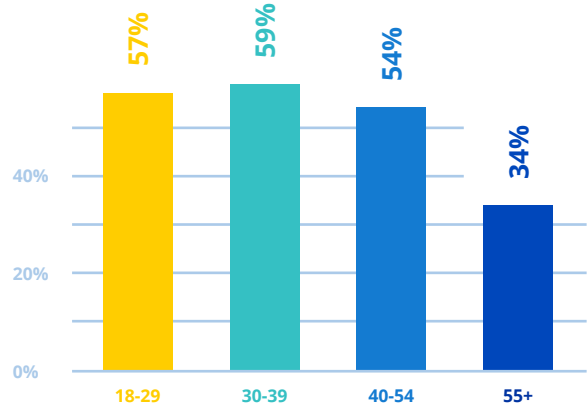
say there is a staffing issue in hospitals today



According to the survey, four in five (81%) Americans say there is a staffing issue in hospitals today, with **nearly half of respondents (49%) saying they would avoid going to a hospital because of staffing shortages.**

Further, **36% of consumers said they are worried about not being able to see the right medical staff** and/or not being able to spend enough time with doctors and/or nurses because of staffing issues.

Likelihood to avoid care due to staffing concerns



Of all those surveyed, age also played a role in staffing concerns, with **those aged 18-54 more likely to avoid visiting a hospital because of staffing shortages** than those 55 and older. Furthermore, consumers with children were more likely to avoid hospital care due to staffing shortages than those without children (62% vs. 45%).

The demographic data revealed those consumers who had visited a hospital in the past year were **more likely to say they would avoid hospital care because of staffing shortages (51% vs. 42%)** versus those who had not.

Indications of concerns about hospital safety

While the expression, “first, do no harm,” articulates the moral obligations of modern medicine, U.S. consumers today question their safety in the hospital environment.

70%

say hospitals need to do a better job with security

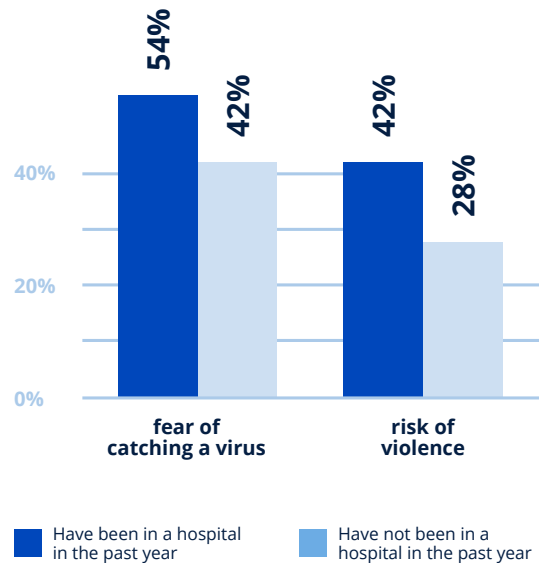


39%

reported they would avoid the hospital because of concerns around violence

Over half (52%) of those surveyed said they are likely to avoid going to the hospital in fear of catching COVID-19 or another virus. More than one-third (36%) cited fears of contracting an infection while recovering in the hospital.

More likely to avoid the acute care setting because of:



Younger respondents, aged 18-29 and 30-39, were more likely to say they would avoid the hospital because of violence than those aged 40-54 and 55 and older (52% & 50% vs. 40% & 22%).

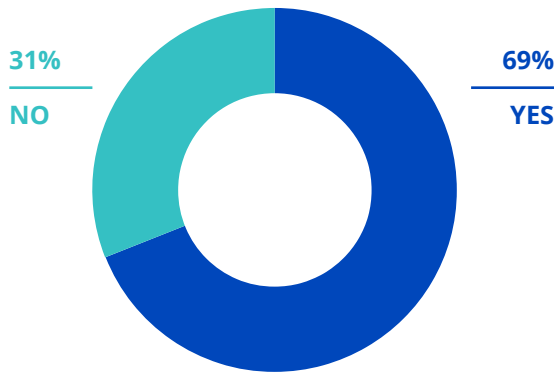
Violence concerns were also cited more with male respondents versus female (41% vs. 36%), and those with children versus those without (52% vs. 30%).

Urgent care centers preferred over hospital ERs

When asked if they would choose an urgent care center over a hospital emergency room (ER), if they could, in the event of an emergency, 69% of consumers surveyed said “yes,” indicating a growing preference for non-acute facilities.

69%

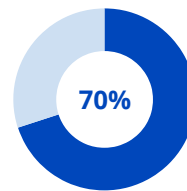
say they would choose an urgent care facility over a hospital’s ER in an emergency



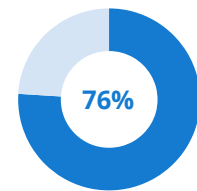
Digging down into the demographic data, respondents who had visited a hospital in the past year were **more likely than those who had not to say they would choose an urgent care facility over a hospital ER in an emergency (70% vs. 65%).**

Respondent age comparison

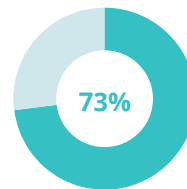
Regarding survey respondent age, **those 18-54 were more likely than those 55 and older** to say they would choose an urgent care facility over a hospital ER if they had the choice.



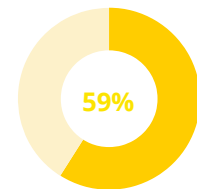
Age 18-29



Age 30-39



Age 40-54

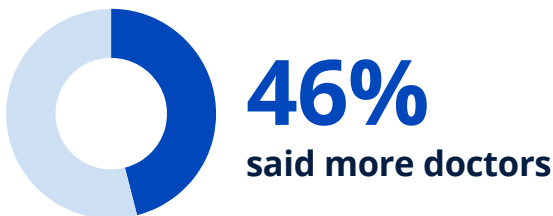
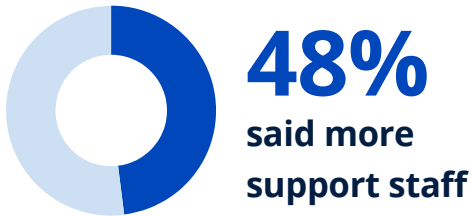
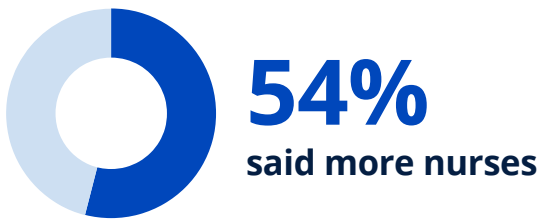


Age 55+

Consumers call for more staff, greater security in hospital settings

So, how can hospital leaders boost consumer confidence in their care settings and care delivery? The survey finds one of American consumers' top desire is around higher staffing levels, followed by enhanced security measures.

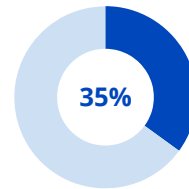
When asked what factors would likely improve visits to a hospital:



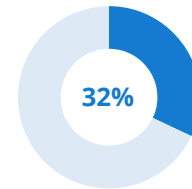
With regards to security, **nearly one-third of those surveyed said better security at hospital entrances would likely improve visits to a hospital**, and one-fifth cited better control over guests and visitors.

Respondent age comparison

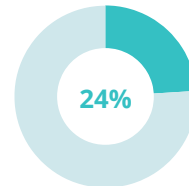
Younger respondents, **aged 18-39**, were more likely than those 40-55 and older to say better control over visitors and guests would most help to improve visits (35% & 32% vs. 24% & 24%).



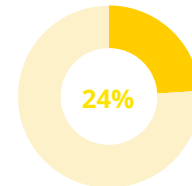
Age 18-29



Age 30-39



Age 40-54



Age 55+

The same was true of respondents with children, **with those having children more likely to say better control over visitors and guests would improve visits (33% vs. 24%)** than those without.



CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by U.S. health systems and hospitals are most notably rising costs, increased competition, shrinking revenues, and chronic staffing shortages.

Understanding patient perceptions and behaviors can be an important factor in developing initiatives to help establish loyal community relationships and survive harsh economic realities. With widespread consumer concerns around hospital staffing shortages, security, and quality of care, it is important that hospital leaders take steps to improve patient confidence.

While there is no easy or fast way to increase clinical staffing levels, particularly with skyrocketing labor costs, there are technology-enabled solutions available. These solutions can help alleviate staff administrative burden through the automation of non-patient care work in the hospital setting and provide another layer to security programs with facility access management.

Vendormate is helping to provide faster, safer access to healthcare sites for visitors and vendors with the Vendormate Kiosk. With combined vendor and visitor management and badging, our kiosks are designed with infection control in mind and help speed check-ins.

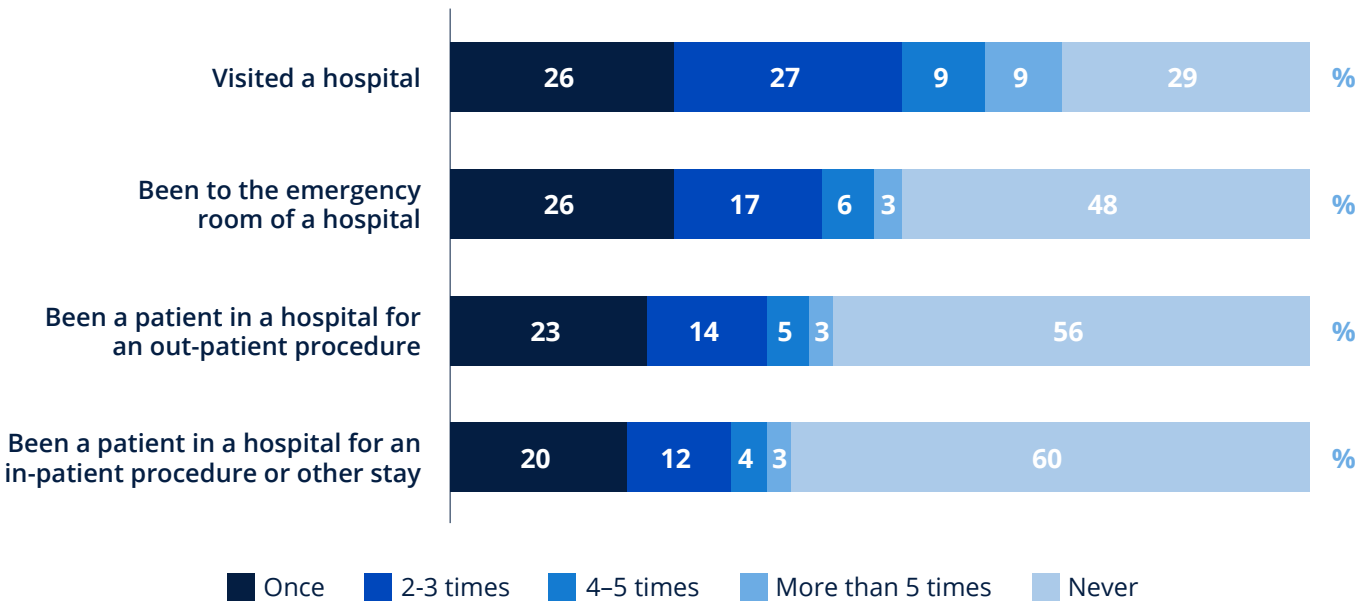
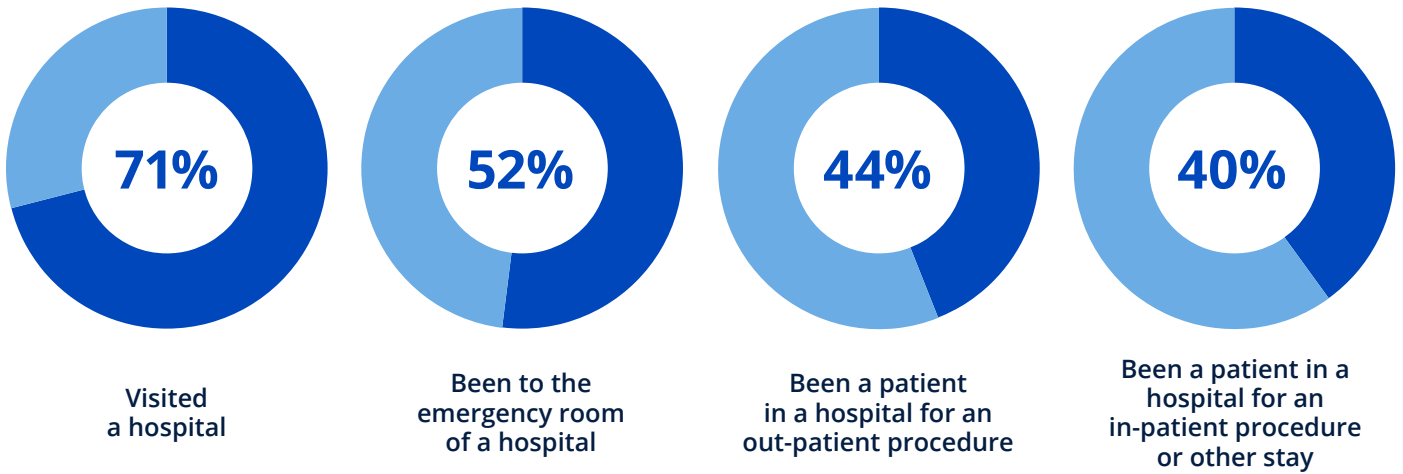
» To learn more about the kiosk and other GHX technology-enabled solutions visit ghx.com.

Consumers continue to rely on hospital care, but for how long?

Seven in 10 (71%) Americans have visited a hospital in the past year and more than half (52%) have been to a hospital emergency room (ER). With regards to procedures, 44% said they had been a hospital patient for an outpatient procedure, and 40% for an inpatient procedure or other stay.

Over the past year, how often, if at all, have you done each of the following?

■ Have done in past year
■ Never done in past year

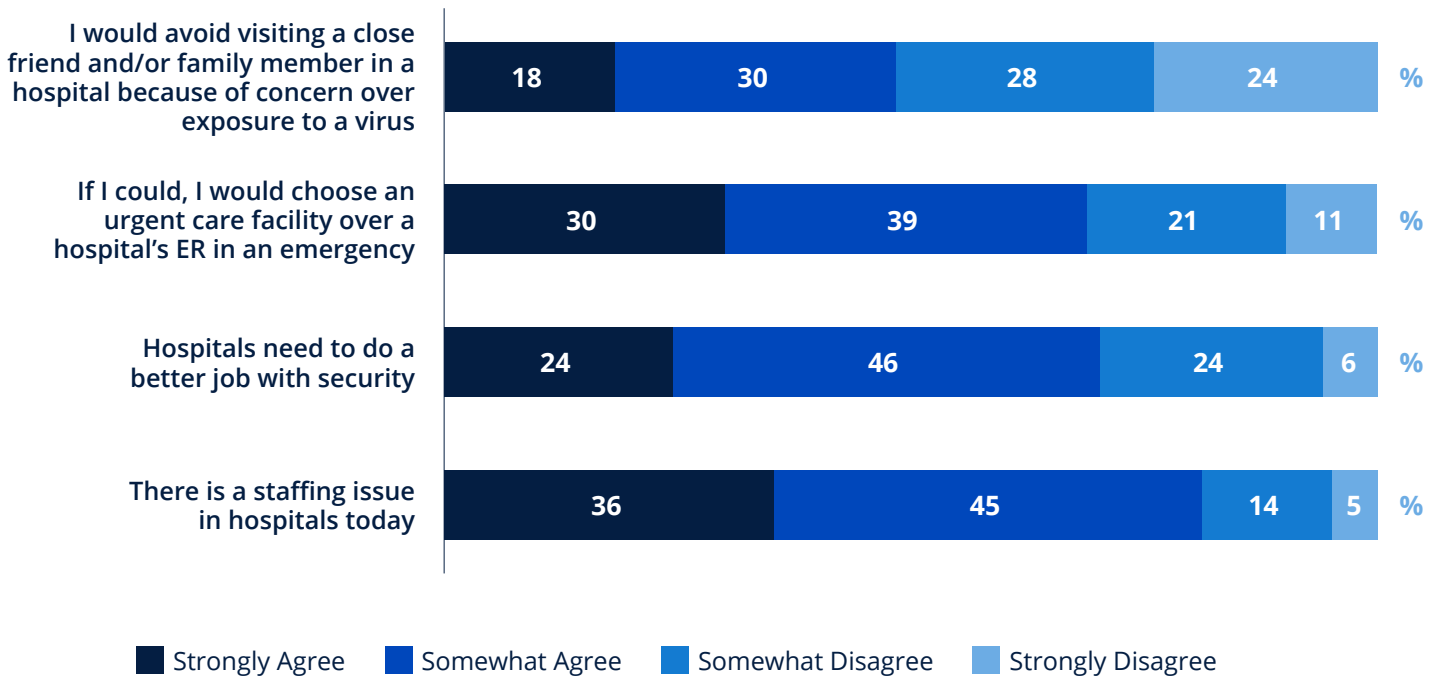
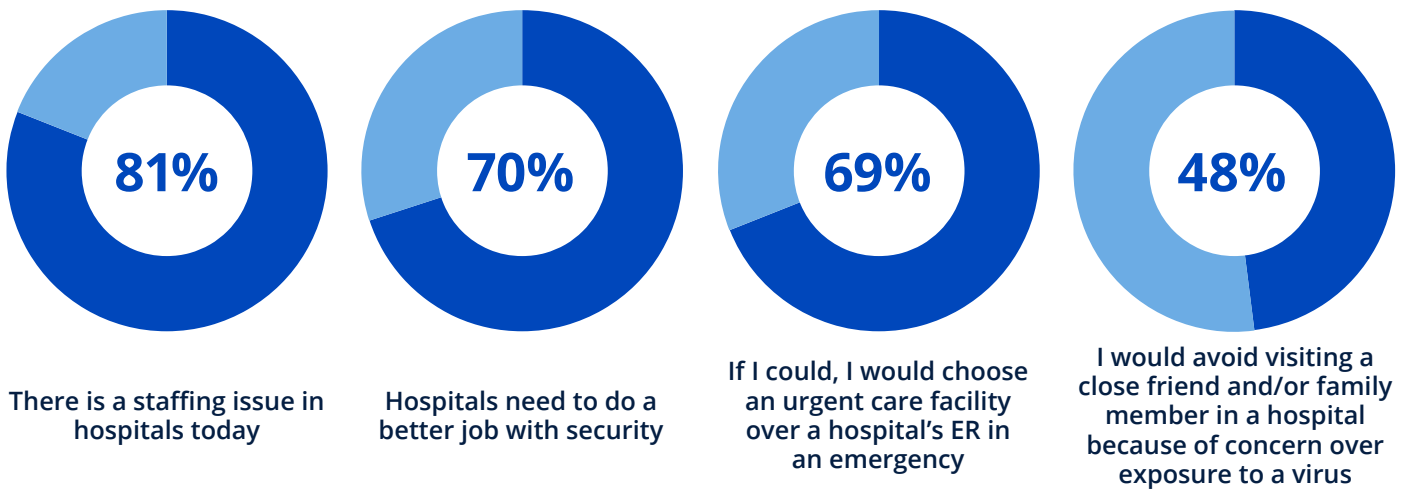


Staffing and security concerns with a shift to outpatient emergency care

Four in five Americans (81%) believe there is a staffing issue in hospitals today. Safety is another concern, with 70% of survey respondents saying hospitals need to do a better job with security. With regards to emergency room (ER) visits, 69% of consumers would choose an urgent care facility over a hospital ER in the event of an emergency if they had the choice.

Agreement with the following statements

Strongly/Somewhat Agree
Somewhat/Strongly Disagree

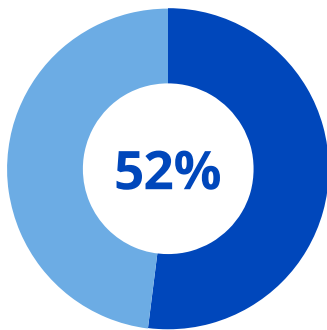


Fears of viruses, low staffing levels and violence

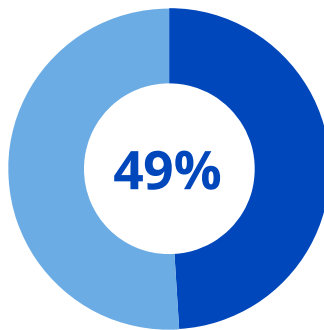
Over half of consumers (52%) said they would avoid going to the hospital in fear of catching COVID-19 or another virus, and nearly half (49%) would avoid a hospital visit because of staffing shortages. Violence was raised as another factor potentially limiting hospital visits, with 39% of Americans saying they would avoid the hospital if they were concerned about violence.

How likely, if at all, would you be to avoid going to a hospital for each of these reasons?

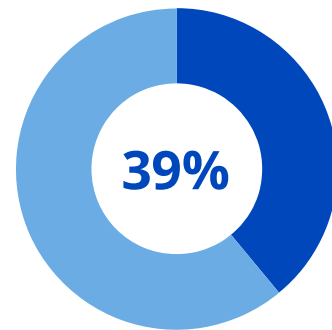
Very Likely/Likely
Not that Likely/Not at all Likely



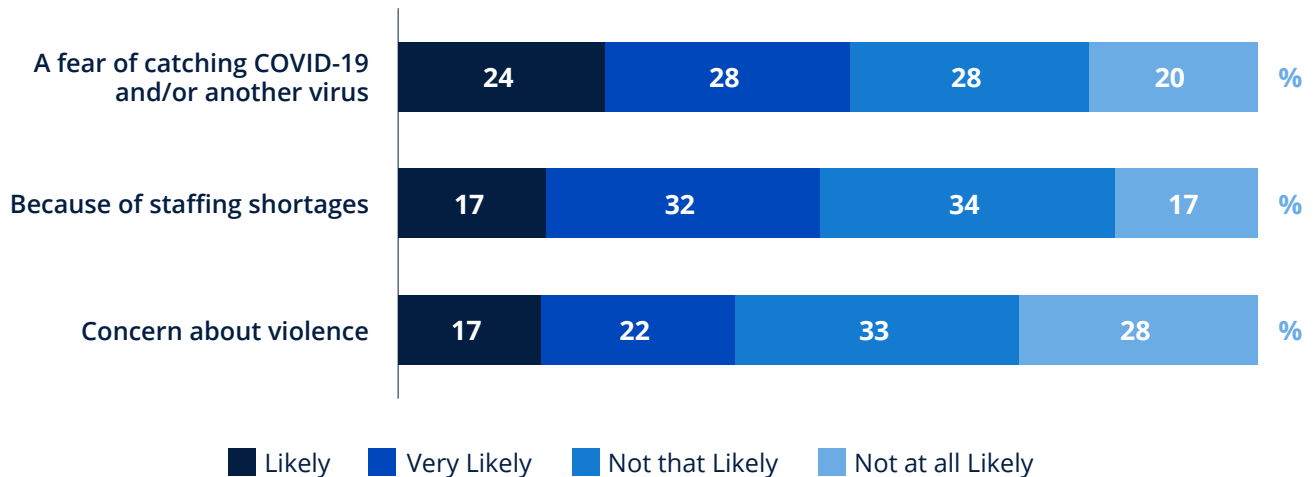
Fear of catching COVID-19 and/or another virus



Because of staffing shortages



Concern about violence

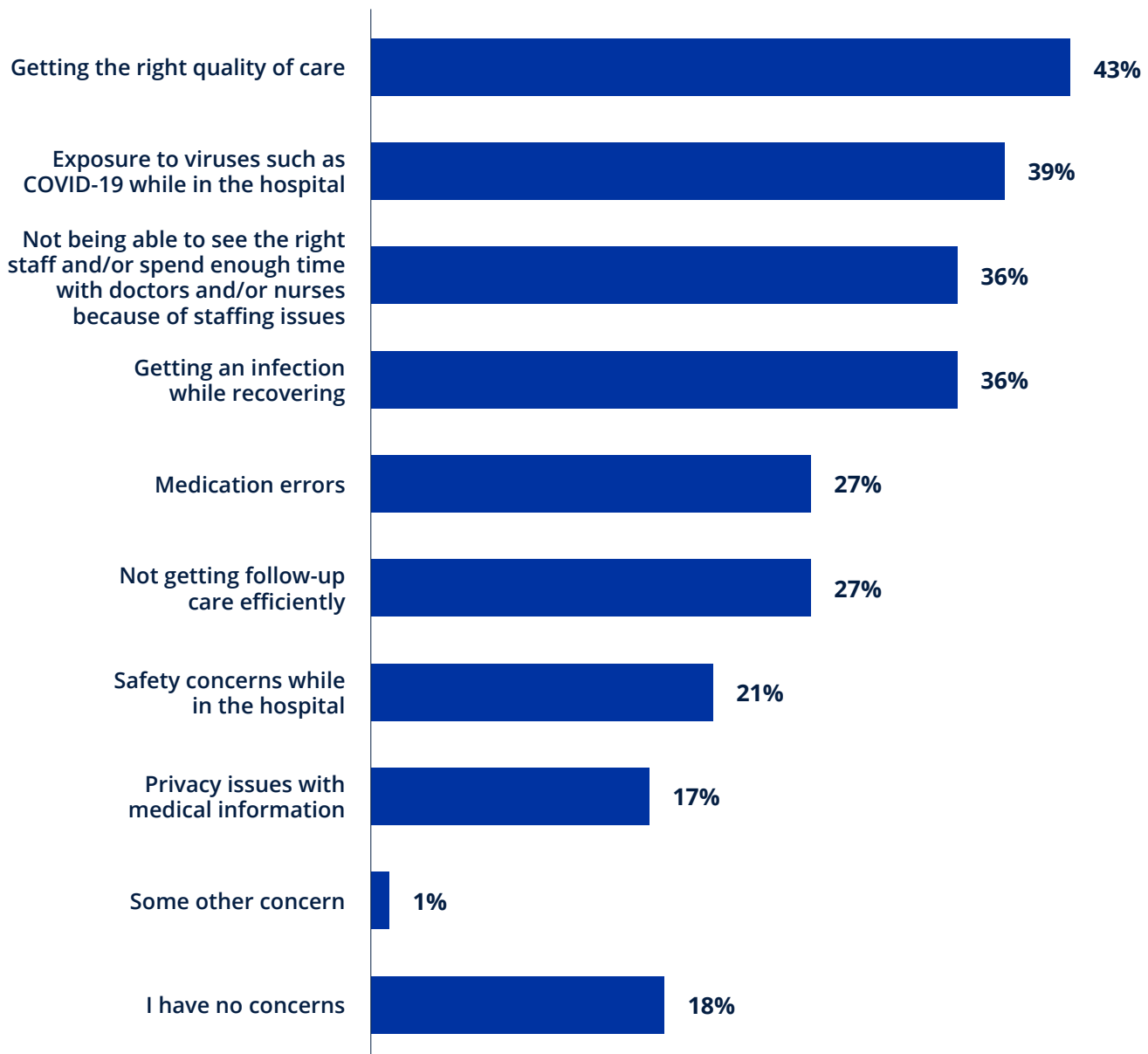


Care quality, infections, lack of staff time fuel concerns

The perception of not getting the right quality of care was a reason 43% of consumers said they would avoid the hospital, while 36% cited concerns about not being able to see the right medical staff and/or not being able to spend enough time with doctors and/or nurses because of staffing issues.

Exposure to viruses and infections is another reason for avoiding hospital visits, with 39% of Americans saying they would stay out of the hospital in fear of virus exposure and 36% concerned about contracting a virus during their recovery time in the hospital setting.

How likely, if at all, would you be to avoid going to a hospital for each of these reasons?

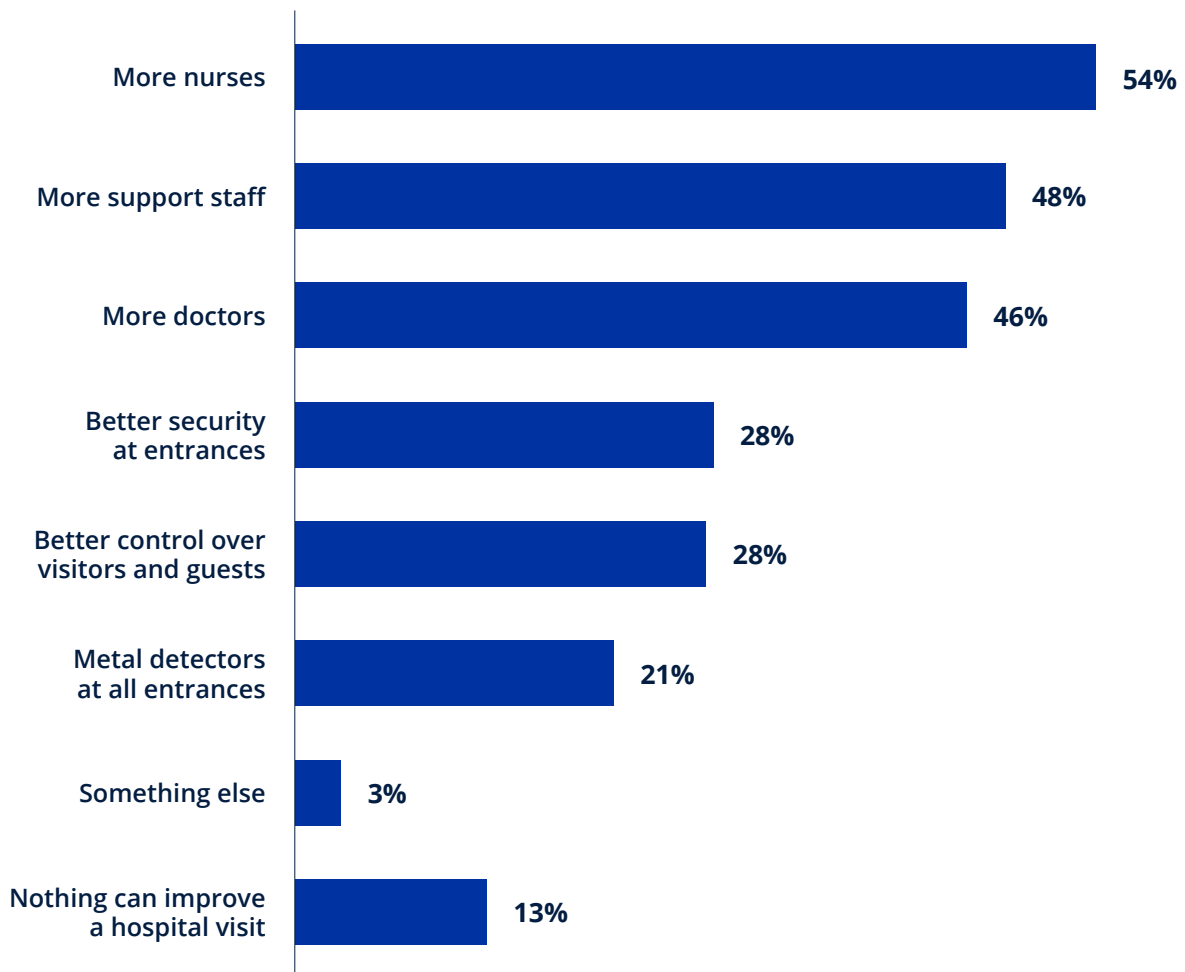


Higher staffing levels, greater security would improve patient and visitor experience

Higher clinical staffing levels was cited as the top factor among consumers that would likely help improve visits to a hospital either as a patient or a visitor, with 54% calling for more nurses, 48% for more support staff, and 46% for more doctors.

Next on the list of priorities was heightened safety measures, including better security at entrances (28%), better control over visitors and guests (28%), and metal detectors at all entrances (21%).

Which of the following do you feel would be most likely to improve visits to a hospital either as a patient or a visitor?



Data summaries based on age, gender, presence of children, household income and region.

Over the past year, how often, if at all, have you done the following?

	Total Number of Respondents	Visited a hospital in the past year	Been to the emergency room of a hospital	Has been a patient for an in-patient procedure or other stay	Has been a patient for an outpatient procedure
18-29	399	82%	67%	52%	52%
30-39	389	82%	61%	47%	48%
40-54	540	71%	55%	43%	40%
55 and over	672	57%	36%	38%	26%
Men	979	73%	53%	45%	47%
Women	1021	68%	52%	35%	41%
Children	807	81%	63%	52%	54%
No Children	1193	63%	45%	31%	37%
less than \$25K	410	76%	63%	47%	45%
\$25K - 49K	498	66%	52%	39%	37%
\$50K - 74.5K	386	69%	50%	43%	36%
\$75K or more	642	74%	49%	47%	42%
Northeast	358	70%	52%	43%	48%
South	742	73%	56%	40%	45%
Midwest	434	72%	51%	36%	41%
West	466	68%	48%	40%	42%

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement.
 “Strongly Agree” and “Somewhat Agree” selections.

	Total Number of Respondents	There's a staffing issue in hospitals	Hospitals need to do a better job with security	I would choose an urgent care facility over a hospital ER in an emergency	I would avoid visiting a close friend and/or family member in a hospital because of a concern over exposure to a virus
18-29	399	73%	73%	70%	56%
30-39	389	79%	72%	76%	55%
40-54	540	82%	72%	73%	48%
55 and over	672	87%	67%	59%	38%
Men	979	77%	69%	68%	48%
Women	1021	85%	72%	69%	48%
Children	807	80%	74%	77%	56%
No Children	1193	82%	68%	63%	42%
less than \$25K	410	79%	73%	68%	56%
\$25K - 49K	498	82%	69%	65%	40%
\$50K - 74.5K	386	73%	66%	67%	44%
\$75K or more	642	81%	72%	73%	51%
Northeast	358	82%	72%	68%	51%
South	742	80%	73%	70%	49%
Midwest	434	85%	65%	66%	44%
West	466	79%	70%	70%	47%

How likely are you to avoid going to a hospital for each of the following reasons? “Strongly Agree” and “Somewhat Agree” selections.

	Total Number of Respondents	Fear of catching COVID-19 and/or another virus	Due to staffing shortages	Due to concerns of violence
18-29	399	56%	57%	52%
30-39	389	58%	59%	50%
40-54	540	54%	54%	40%
55 and over	672	42%	34%	22%
Men	979	52%	49%	41%
Women	1021	51%	49%	36%
Children	807	62%	62%	52%
No Children	1193	45%	45%	30%
less than \$25K	410	54%	53%	45%
\$25K - 49K	498	46%	42%	32%
\$50K - 74.5K	386	47%	45%	34%
\$75K or more	642	58%	55%	45%
Northeast	358	53%	52%	41%
South	742	54%	50%	40%
Midwest	434	46%	47%	33%
West	466	53%	48%	40%

How likely are you to avoid going to a hospital for each of the following reasons? “Strongly Agree” and “Somewhat Agree” selections.

	Total Number of Respondents	Getting the right quality of care	Exposure to viruses such as COVID-19 while in the hospital	Not being able to see the right medical staff and/or not being able to spend enough time with doctors and/or nurses because of staffing issues	Getting an infection while recovering	Medication errors	Not getting follow-up care efficiently	Safety concerns while in the hospital	Privacy issues with medical information	Some other concern	I have no concerns
18-29	399	38%	32%	30%	25%	20%	26%	24%	22%	1%	18%
30-39	389	41%	37%	36%	30%	22%	24%	24%	18%	1%	14%
40-54	540	47%	39%	34%	37%	27%	28%	20%	19%	1%	17%
55 and over	672	45%	45%	41%	45%	34%	28%	19%	13%	1%	21%
Men	979	38%	37%	29%	31%	25%	23%	21%	19%	1%	19%
Women	1021	48%	41%	42%	41%	29%	30%	21%	16%	1%	17%
Children	807	43%	38%	34%	34%	24%	26%	24%	22%	0%	12%
No Children	1193	43%	40%	37%	37%	29%	27%	19%	14%	1%	22%
less than \$25K	410	44%	40%	36%	32%	26%	26%	23%	21%	1%	21%
\$25K – 49K	498	44%	39%	36%	36%	38%	28%	20%	15%	1%	19%
\$50K – 74.5K	386	42%	39%	37%	36%	23%	27%	18%	17%	0%	21%
\$75K or more	642	44%	39%	35%	37%	29%	27%	24%	19%	1%	11%
Northeast	358	44%	41%	33%	36%	29%	23%	20%	18%	0%	17%
South	742	46%	42%	35%	36%	28%	26%	24%	16%	1%	17%
Midwest	434	40%	35%	40%	33%	27%	28%	17%	16%	1%	21%
West	466	42%	38%	35%	37%	25%	29%	22%	20%	1%	17%

Which of the following do you feel would be most likely to help improve visits to a hospital either as a patient or visitor? Top 2-3 answers selected.

	Total Number of Respondents	More nurses	More support staff	More doctors	Better security at entrances	Better control over visitors and guests	Metal detectors at all entrances	Something else	Nothing can improve a hospital visit
18-29	399	41%	46%	45%	27%	35%	24%	4%	14%
30-39	389	48%	46%	47%	33%	32%	27%	3%	10%
40-54	540	55%	48%	55%	24%	24%	20%	4%	13%
55 and over	672	63%	49%	39%	29%	24%	17%	3%	14%
Men	979	50%	48%	46%	28%	29%	23%	3%	12%
Women	1021	57%	47%	46%	27%	26%	19%	3%	13%
Children	807	50%	47%	50%	30%	33%	26%	3%	8%
No Children	1193	56%	48%	43%	26%	24%	17%	3%	16%
less than \$25K	410	51%	45%	46%	28%	28%	17%	4%	17%
\$25K - 49K	498	55%	49%	43%	24%	24%	21%	3%	14%
\$50K - 74.5K	386	53%	45%	46%	29%	29%	19%	4%	13%
\$75K or more	642	54%	51%	48%	30%	30%	25%	3%	8%
Northeast	358	52%	47%	47%	29%	31%	23%	1%	12%
South	742	52%	48%	46%	30%	28%	22%	4%	12%
Midwest	434	59%	44%	44%	25%	24%	17%	3%	16%
West	466	53%	51%	48%	26%	29%	22%	4%	11%