

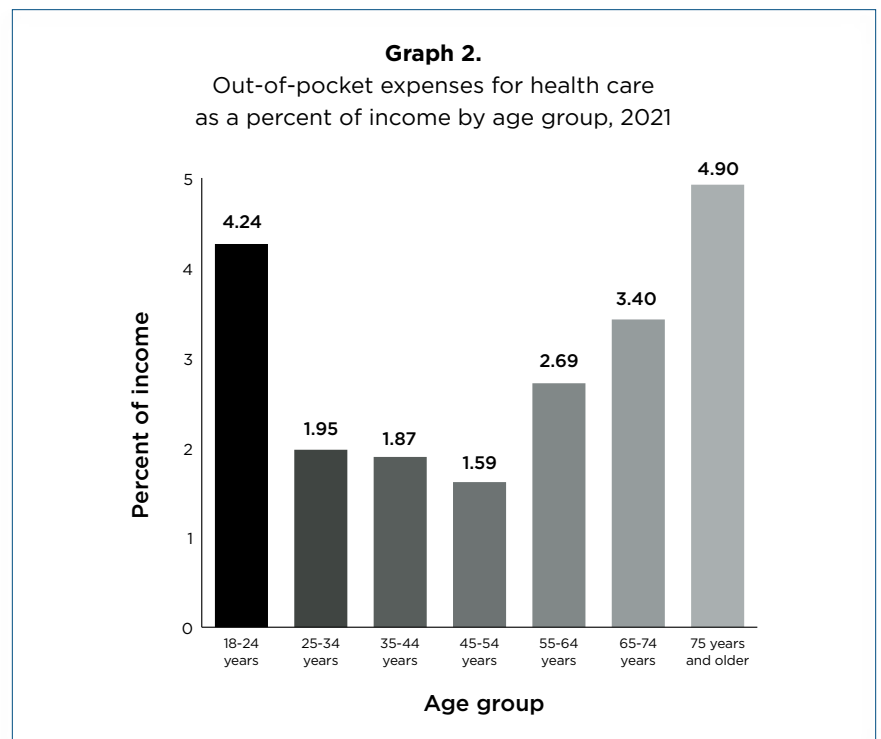
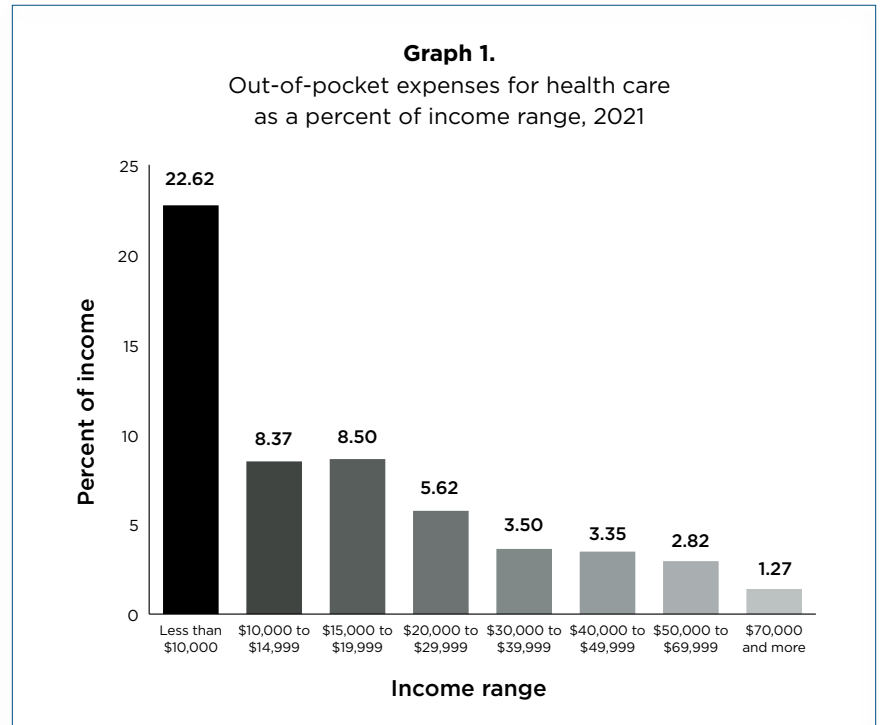
Medical Expenditure Panel Survey | Income

The cost of health care is a growing concern for many Americans. Often families' health care expenses are not fully covered by health insurance, and the COVID-19 crisis makes the ability to pay for health care even more uncertain.

Not all people face financial health care burdens equally. People with low income tend to pay a much larger share of their income for health care than do people with high income (Graph 1). Older people tend to pay a higher percentage of their income for medical care than younger people (Graph 2).

To help researchers and others working on these problems, the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey examines how much medical costs affect American families by asking questions, including questions about income. **With your help, we gain greater understanding about the impact of the cost of health care.** We need to ask questions about your income.

THANK YOU for your continued participation in the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey!



Source: The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

Common questions that others ask about the **income section** of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

Q. Why will you ask questions about income?

A. To get a complete picture of the effects of health care costs on American families, we need to collect information on income. This information can show how health care affects an individual's as well as our nation's economic well-being and show how financial resources affect the choice and use of health care services.

Approximately every six months we collect information on a number of topics related to health care use and cost. We will ask about your health insurance coverage and medical services received, including where those services were received, who provides them, and charges and payments for services.

Q. What will you do with this information?

A. We have found that there is an association between income and the use of health care. Your answers to the questions on income will be analyzed with your responses to other questions, such as how often you see a doctor. This will allow policy makers to compare the relationship between personal finances and an individual's expenses for health care.

Q. Is this information confidential?

A. Yes. All information collected by the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey is protected by the Privacy Act and Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 299c-3(c) and 42 U.S.C. 242m(d)]. The confidentiality of your responses to this survey is protected by Section 944(c). Information that could identify you will not be disclosed unless you have consented to that disclosure.

Q. What will you ask me about?

A. We will ask for the same type of information that is recorded on your Federal income tax return, such as taxable income from salaries or wages, social security, pensions, investments, etc. In fact, most of the information can be taken directly from your 2023 Federal income tax return. There are some additional questions on nontaxable income such as worker's compensation, Supplemental Security Income (S.S.I.), public assistance, and Veterans' payments.

Q. Do I need records, such as my income tax records, to respond to these questions?

A. No. However, if you have completed your 2023 Federal income tax return, it will be very useful. If you have not completed your 2023 tax return, it might be helpful to use some of your household's financial records that are used to complete the tax return, such as year-end bank statements, financial summaries, pay stubs, W-2 forms, etc.

Q. What if I do not know an answer?

A. Just do the best you can. If you do not know an answer to a question, tell the interviewer that you don't know that information.

Q. Do I have to answer these questions?

A. No. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or series of questions. However, because information about income is very important to help us understand health care, we hope you will be willing to provide us with this information.

Q. What should I do if I have more questions?

A. If you or other members of your household have any concerns about these questions, please call Alex Scott, a survey representative, at this toll-free number: 1-800-945-MEPS (6377).