



Michigan Residents' Perceptions about Access to and the Cost of Health Care

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ABSTRACT

Michigan residents were asked to compare their current health care status with their situation five years ago in regard to health insurance coverage, out-of-pocket health costs, and access to medications and medical treatment. Using data from the Michigan State of the State Survey (SOSS-43), we found that the majority of Michigan residents had health insurance coverage. At the same time, they equally perceived that they were “better off,” “the same,” and “worse off” in regard to health insurance coverage and access to medications than they were five years ago. They also perceived that their out-of-pocket health costs have “gotten worse” in the last five years. Finally, we found that Michigan residents perceived health care access and cost differently depending on the region in which they live in, by race/ethnicity, educational levels, family income, and the current type of health insurance coverage. These findings reflect persistent inequalities in health care access that stem from socioeconomic inequalities and uneven access to economic opportunities of different places in Michigan. The results in this study suggest the following policy implications: increasing health insurance coverage, especially for those in lower-socioeconomic ranks, ethnic and racial minority groups, and those in isolated and remote areas without access to health care, and reducing racial/ethnic, educational, economic, and spatial inequalities, making health care affordable, and improving healthy lifestyles in different communities.