

Texas Statewide Healthcare Polling Memo



DATE: Tuesday, April 28, 2026
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Chris Lane, Senior Partner & Pollster, Cygnal
RE: TX Hospital Systems Survey: Public Opinion on Hospital Costs

Executive Summary

Healthcare cost anxiety runs deep across Texas. Voters agree (90%) that costs are rising, 70% say hospitals are doing a poor job keeping care affordable, and 60% received a bill last year that was higher than expected. Hospital systems as a category sit at net -16 in favorability, while individual brands vary widely depending on local presence and nonprofit status. When voters learn how hospital systems operate, covering executive pay, billing practices, tax benefits, and price compliance, blame for rising costs shifts by double digits across every partisan group. Tremendous concern already exists, and the data shows what moves it.

Situation & Sentiment

Individual hospital brands split sharply from the institutional category. Nonprofits with strong local presence carry more insulation than for-profit or regionally distant operators.

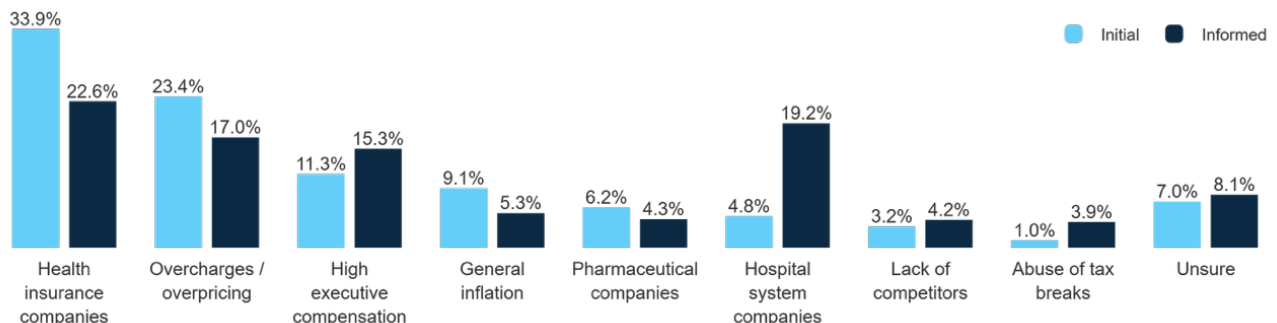
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Hospital Systems (category)	31%	47%	-16
Baylor Scott & White	38%	18%	+20
Memorial Hermann	27%	16%	+11
HCA Healthcare	20%	30%	-10
Ascension	11%	15%	-5

Voter Concerns

When voters learn that hospitals may be misusing federal healthcare programs or billing improperly, their concerns are intense and concrete. More than half (56%) point to patients paying higher out-of-pocket costs as their top concern. Nearly half (48%) are most troubled by hospitals profiting instead of helping vulnerable patients. One in three (33%) cite patients being denied access to care. Taxpayer dollars being wasted rounds out the picture at 32%, reflecting the tax-exempt and federal subsidy dimensions of the issue.

Blame & Public Accountability

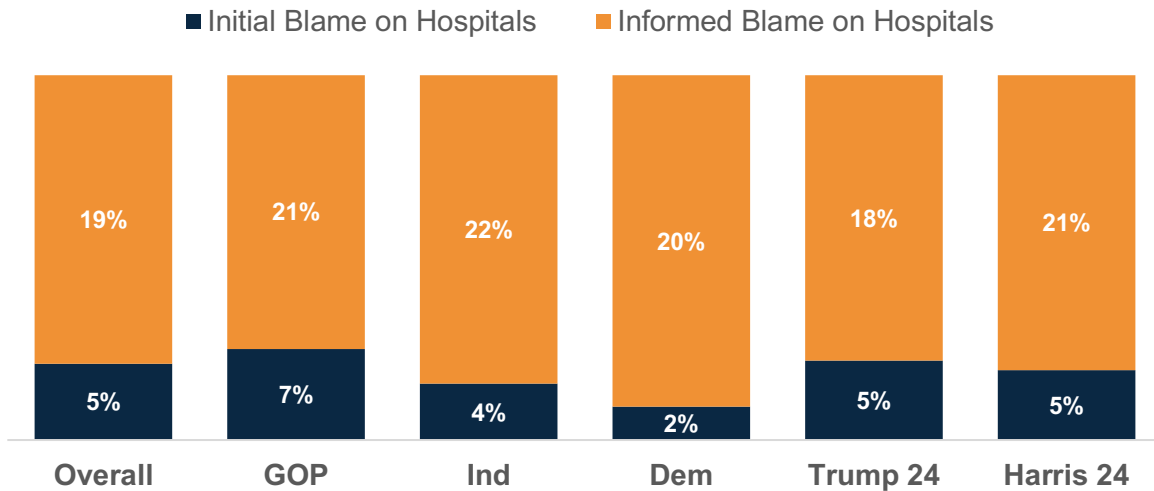
Before receiving any information about hospital practices, voters distributed blame for rising costs broadly. Insurance companies led at 34%, overcharges and overpricing at 23%, and general inflation at 9%. Hospital systems themselves registered at just 5%.



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After reviewing information about hospital system practices, blame shifts significantly. Hospitals rise from 5% to 19%, a 14-point increase. Insurance drops from 34% to 23%. The shift holds across every partisan group. Republicans move +14, Independents and Democrats each move +18, Trump voters +13, Harris voters +16. The consistency of the shift across party lines reflects the breadth of constituent sentiment on this issue.



Public Support for Transparency

93% of Texas voters support government-mandated hospital price transparency, with 80% strongly supporting. Support is uniform across party lines: Republicans 92%, Independents 94%, Democrats 92%. Opposition does not exceed 5% in any subgroup.

Price transparency commands the kind of near-universal constituent backing that is rare in a polarized environment. 93% support is the highest of any issue tested in this survey. That makes price transparency a natural starting point for any policy discussion on hospital accountability, with the 60% of voters who received a surprise bill last year representing a particularly engaged constituency on the question.

Policy Implications

The public does not respond to general cost complaints. What moves opinion are specific, concrete practices: hospitals taking tax benefits while denying charity care, CEO pay that outpaces average workers by 60 to 1, price non-compliance with existing federal law, and aggressive billing and collections against patients already struggling.

Each of these is an area where constituents are already engaged and where the public already supports action. Charity care requirements, price transparency enforcement, executive compensation disclosure, and tax exemption accountability all draw strong responses across partisan lines. The public has already connected these practices to the costs they are paying. The survey data reflects a constituency that is ahead of the policy conversation, not waiting to be brought along.

Across every partisan group, every region, and every demographic in this survey, the numbers move the same way. When 93% of voters support action and blame shifts 14 points after a single exposure to the facts, the data is not suggesting an opportunity, it is confirming one.

Methodology: This probabilistic survey was conducted April 9 - 12, 2026, with 600 likely general election voters. It has a margin of error of $\pm 4.00\%$. Likely general election voters were interviewed via live phones and SMS. This survey was weighted to a likely general election voters audience.