

## AMERICANS PREFER PHYSICIANS FOR THEIR MEDICAL CARE



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When asked to choose who they prefer to see for their medical care, Americans overwhelmingly want a physician (72%) over a nurse practitioner (7%), while roughly a fifth (21%) either has no preference (16%) or doesn't know (5%), according to a new survey of 1,000 adults and an oversample of 320 opinion leaders (for a survey total of 363 opinion leaders) conducted on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians. In addition, 73% of adults and 84% of opinion leaders prefer to take a loved one to a physician over a nurse practitioner.

Americans' preference to see or take a loved one to see a physician is reflected in their current medical choices. More than seven in ten Americans (71%) currently see a physician for their main medical care, and three quarters (75%) take a child or loved one to a physician for their main medical care.

### *Perceptions of Physicians, Family Physicians*

When asked what characteristics are most important in the health professional people see for their main medical needs, 'knowledgeable' (37%), 'up to date when it comes to the latest medical advances and treatments' (29%), 'experienced' and 'someone you can trust (both 27%) rank highest.

Furthermore, when asked to assign a list of 19 characteristics to physicians, family physicians, nurses, and nurse practitioners, a majority assigned 15 of the 19 characteristics to physicians and family physicians (together), including the ones respondents say are most important in the health professional they see for their main medical needs: physicians lead on 'knowledgeable' (77%), 'up to date on medical treatments' (80%), 'experienced' (77%), and 'someone you trust' (72%).

Characteristics of Health Professionals		Most Important Characteristics in Health Professional Seen for Main Medical Needs	
<b><i>FAMILY PHYSICIANS AND PHYSICIANS HAVE MAJORITY ATTRIBUTION ON:</i></b>			
Who I want to see when I am sick	83%	Knowledgeable	37%
A leader	83%	Up to date on medical advances & treatments	29%
Up to date on medical advances & treatments	80%	Experienced	27%
Professional	78%	Someone you trust	27%
Experienced	77%	Someone in whom you have confidence	22%
Knowledgeable	77%	Focused on patients	21%
Someone in whom you have confidence	74%	Someone who cares about you	17%
Someone you trust	72%	Professional	17%
Who I want to see for preventive care	72%	Good listener	17%
Someone you respect	71%	Effective	15%
Gives you what you need	63%	Affordable	12%
Dependable	56%	Accessible	11%
Effective	56%	Available	11%
Someone who cares about you	54%	Dependable	10%
Focused on patients	51%	Gives you what you need	9%
<b><i>NURSES AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS HAVE MAJORITY ATTRIBUTION ON:</i></b>		Friendly	8%
Comforting	71%	Comforting	6%
Friendly	68%	Someone you respect	6%
Patient	63%	Patient	6%
Good listener	56%	A leader	3%

When asked about the ‘core’ medical team that would oversee and confer about what is best in terms of an individual’s medical needs, Americans’ first choice is a primary care physician (41%), followed by a physician (24%). In total, 88% choose a physician of some kind as their first choice, and nine out of ten Americans (90%) prefer to have a physician lead their medical team.

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*These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) from November 8-15, 2013. For the survey, a sample of 1,000 US adults 18+ was interviewed online, as well as a ‘booster’ sample of 320 Opinion Leaders (defined below) for a survey total of 363 Opinion Leaders (43 occurred naturally in the core sample of 1,000 US adults 18+). The precision of the Ipsos’ online polls are measured using credibility intervals. In this case, the credibility interval for all adults is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. The credibility interval for Opinion Leaders is +5.9. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix. For this survey, Opinion Leaders are defined as individuals who are registered to vote; have at least a college degree; are over age 25; are employed or looking for work; make more than \$75,000 annually unless they are between the ages of 25 and 29, who are heavy news consumers, and who are politically engaged.*

*The national sample of 1,000 was weighted by gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and party identification. The sample of 363 Opinion Leaders was weighted by gender, age, region, ethnicity, and party identification. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error.*

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