

Are medical costs impacting holiday plans?



Within the past two years, high medical costs led **71%** of American families with children to **make a sacrifice or hard decision during the holidays**, according to an Aflac survey.¹

47% of families who visited the hospital in the past two years had to pay **\$500 or more in out-of-pocket costs.**¹




That's **nearly half** of what the average U.S. shopper plans to spend this holiday season (\$1,047.83).²

How are medical cost concerns affecting families this season?

The most common holiday sacrifices for families:¹


Fewer holiday gifts

- 24%** spent less on holiday gifts.
- 20%** decided against purchasing a gift for a loved one.




Increased holiday debt

- 26%** relied on a credit card.
- 18%** borrowed money from a friend or family member.
- 12%** took out a loan.

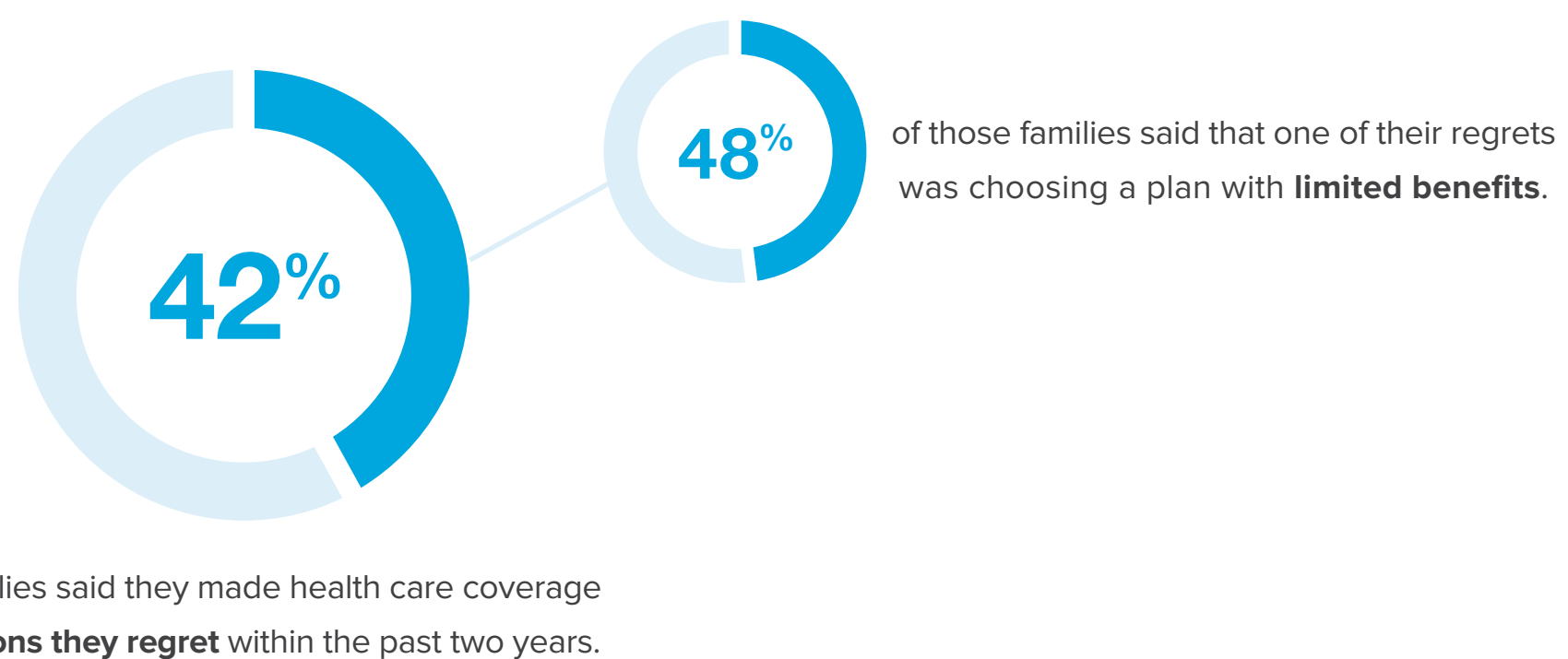


Affected travel plans

- 19%** canceled travel plans to see friends and family.
- 18%** canceled holiday events.
- 17%** of family wage earners picked up extra hours to offset medical expenses.



Statistics show people are ill-equipped to address this issue even if they have tried to prepare.¹



U.S. families need help with the expenses health insurance doesn't cover. Aflac's supplemental insurance provides families with cash benefits that can be used however they want to help ensure better financial protection during the holidays — and throughout the year.

Get to know us at [Aflac.com](https://www.aflac.com).



¹2019 Aflac Health Care Issues Survey, a national online survey of 1,127 U.S. adults fielded in October 2019 by Hill+Knowlton Strategies. Learn more at [Aflac.com/HCI](https://www.aflac.com/HCI).
²NRF Winter Holiday Trends Report, available at <https://nrf.com/insights/holiday-and-seasonal-trends/winter-holidays>. Accessed Nov. 4, 2019.

Families with kids face financial hardships due to medical costs

Among families with kids who visited the hospital in the past two years, **73% faced medical expenses** beyond a copay or deductible.

Out-of-pocket costs can be significant: nearly half (47%) of families with kids who visited a hospital in the past two years said they **spent \$500 or more** in out-of-pocket costs.

- 29% of families with kids who visited a hospital in the past two years said they **spent \$1,000 or more** in out-of-pocket costs.

Medical expenses are forcing more than **two-thirds (69%) of families with children to make some type of sacrifice**, such as:

- Rely on a credit card (37%).
- Pick up extra hours/shifts to offset medical expenses (26%).
- Take out a loan (21%).

Medical costs affect continued access to health care: 35% of families with kids said they had to postpone their own medical appointments due to medical cost concerns and a quarter (24%) postponed taking a family member to see a medical professional.

Coverage choices cause some regret

1 in 4 (26%) Americans said they have made health care coverage decisions they regret within the past two years.

Reasons for regret include:

- Chose a plan with limited benefits (40%).
- Went to a doctor out of network (33%).
- Did not sufficiently research my benefits (31%).
- Chose too high a deductible (29%).
- Chose a plan that didn't include my doctor's network (25%).
- Did not contribute to my FSA/HSA (17%).

Families more likely to make health care coverage choices they regret

42% of families with children said they made health care coverage decisions they regret within the past two years.

Reasons for regret among families with kids include:

- Chose a plan with limited benefits (48%).
- Went to a doctor out of network (41%).
- Chose too high a deductible (36%).
- Chose a plan that didn't include my doctor's network (30%).
- Did not sufficiently research my benefits (26%).
- Did not contribute to my FSA/HSA (26%).

Americans are highly familiar with hospitals

Almost half of Americans (49%) say they have been to a hospital in the past two years for an outpatient procedure, an overnight stay or both.

- 30% went to the hospital for an outpatient procedure.
- 11% have been to a hospital for an overnight stay.
- 8% had both outpatient procedure(s) and inpatient procedures requiring an overnight stay.

Americans visited the hospital within the past two years for the following reasons:

- Pre-scheduled surgery, such as but not limited to hip or knee replacement, etc. (38%).
- Accident, such as but not limited to a broken bone, cut, burn, etc. (31%).
- Chronic illness, such as but not limited to arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, etc. (30%).
- Sudden illness, such as but not limited to a heart attack, stroke, etc. (28%).
- Other (16%).