

GSC Survey Results: 70% of grads avoiding medical care due to cost

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Tl;dr: See the [preliminary report on the healthcare section of this years' GSC Quality of Life Data survey](#). A number of the trends are quite alarming.

Dear grads,

The GSC Advocacy Committee is currently working to analyze the results of the 2020 Quality of Life Survey. Because the Faculty's Standing Health Committee has begun to meet to negotiate next year's health insurance plan, the GSC Health Subcommittee has produced a brief preliminary report on the status of graduate student healthcare based on these survey results, which is attached. The report makes comparisons between the survey results from this year (2020, response rate: 52.8%) and last year (2019, response rate: 54.6%). We will release a complete report when we receive additional survey data, but we wanted to share this now given the urgent nature of the health insurance situation. [Read our preliminary report here.](#)

Note: the 2020 survey was closed while the AY 2020-21 health insurance plan had been in effect for about one month.

In summary, there are a number of disturbing trends showing widespread lack of access to care. For example,

- 71.6% of respondents are avoiding medical care due to cost, more than double from last year
- 15% of respondents spent over \$1000 on medical care (not including premiums)
- An increased fraction of respondents reported no out-of-pocket costs, possibly reflecting the larger fraction of people avoiding healthcare.
- 23.8% of respondents needed medical care not covered by their health insurance plan
- 37.5% of respondents report a chronic health condition during their time at Caltech
- 6.0% of respondents identify as disabled
- 25.8% of respondents expect they will have difficulty accessing medical treatment this year
- 32 of the 48 students who applied for the Student Emergency Fund applied for health reasons
- 87.2% of respondents are experiencing a heightened level of stress, anxiety, or isolation
- 13.8% of respondents used all 25 covered mental health visits last year

These trends are likely to get worse next year due to the cuts in health benefits that came into effect this past September, particularly disturbing as the pandemic rages on, uncontrolled in nearly every state in the US.

Student advocacy is crucial if we are going to prevent further cuts to student health insurance. If you would like to get involved in student healthcare advocacy, email us at caltechgradhealth@gmail.com. Our regular biweekly meetings will commence again after the break on January 8, 2021 at 11 am PT.

In Solidarity,

Ashay and Jane

GSC Health Subcommittee
On Behalf of Caltech for Affordable Healthcare