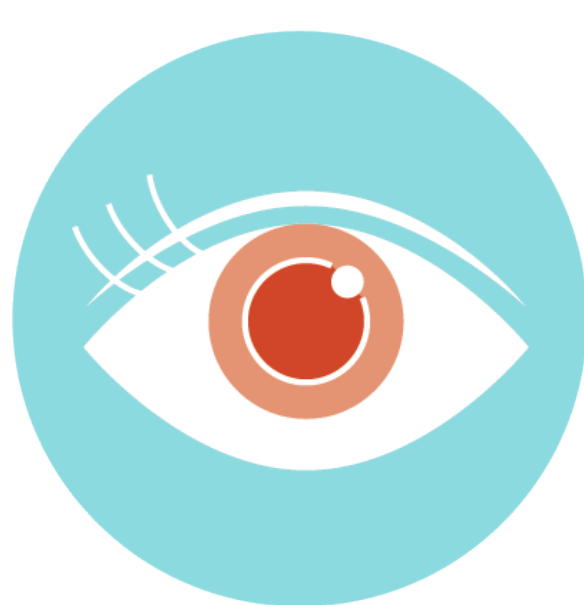


# Making vision care count— even during a crisis

Findings from Versant Health's second annual Vision Wellness Study



**Eye care is an essential service for Americans' well-being.** Healthy vision is an important part of independent living, and eye exams are a window into overall health. As such, the role of eye care in wellness has never been more clear than during the COVID-19 pandemic that dominated most of 2020.

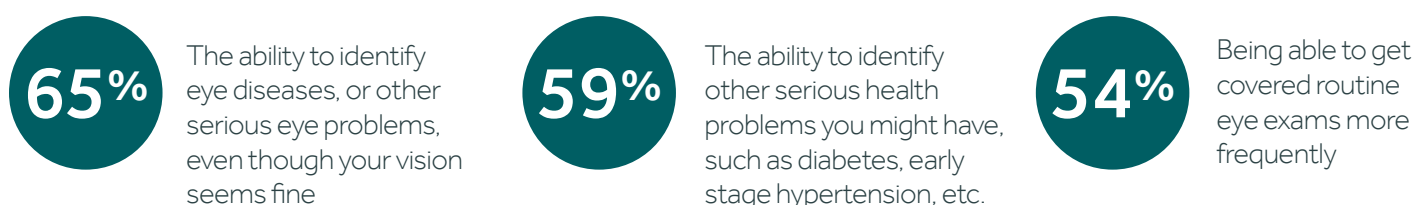
The good news is Americans are seeing the value of eye exams, according to the second annual Vision Wellness Study. More adults say they have received an eye exam within the past two years, compared to those who said the same in 2019 (81% vs. 77%, respectively). To add, more than half (53%) say their household members get an eye exam about once a year, and more than two thirds (69%) say having access to technology for virtual eye care visits would make have a high or moderate impact on the likelihood that their household members see an eye doctor more often.

The Vision Wellness Study explores how people's views of eye exams have changed in the pandemic environment, including beliefs about the value of eye care services, the impact of technology innovations on accessing eye care, and concerns about care costs.

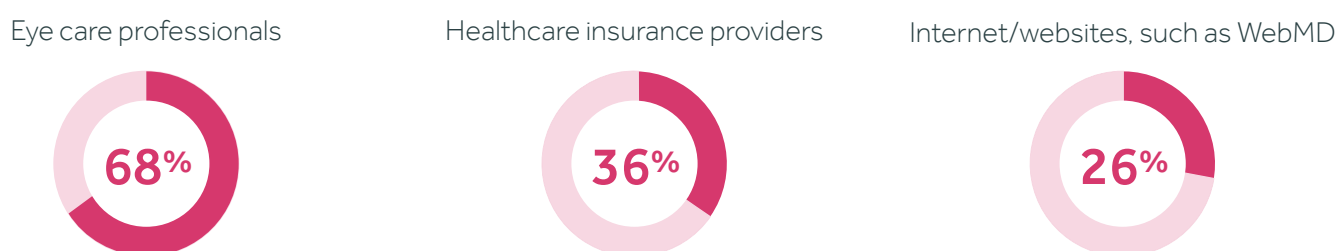
## Perceptions of eye care value vs. cost

Eye care remains a priority for respondents even during the pandemic. Many respondents continued to place high value on the services they receive from eye care professionals, highlighting the importance of healthy, clear vision and the role of eye care in our daily lives.

Top three eye doctor services rated as high value:



People are very likely to seek advice about eye health from:



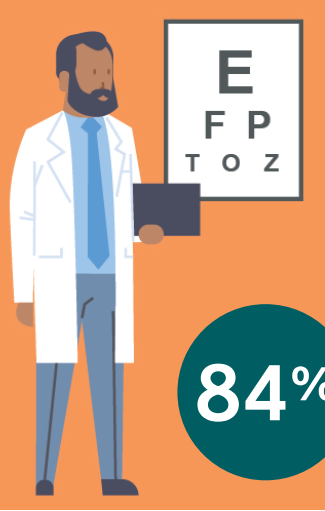
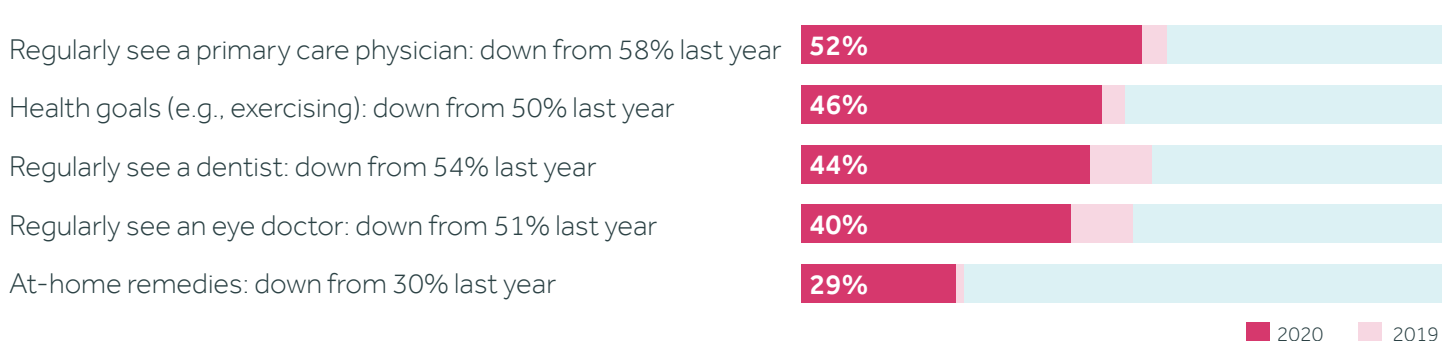
Despite eye care priorities, the cost of care is a top concern for Americans, many of whom are focused on ways they can reduce their overall health spending. While there is a year-over-year decline in actions people take to reduce care costs, the number of people who cite health goals—such as exercising—has risen to the second most selected option, pointing to an interest in at-home solutions.



Consumers surveyed cite the following healthcare topics as very important:



How do consumers and their household members reduce healthcare costs?



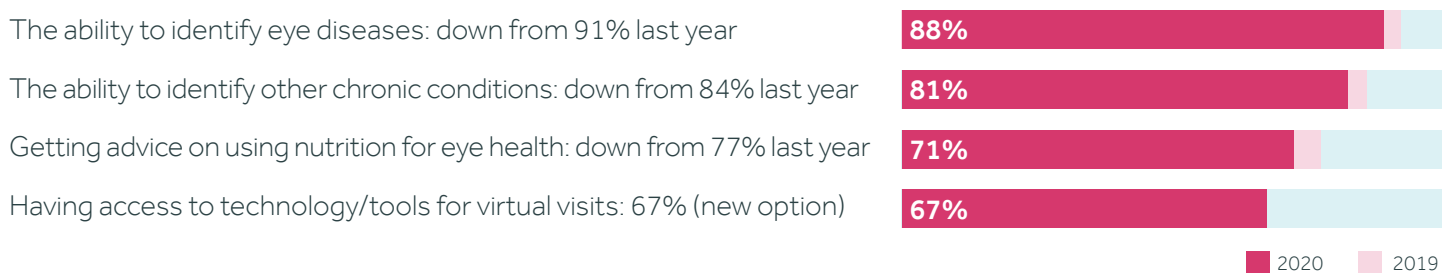
**84%**

Consumers continued to rate eye care professionals' ability to identify eye diseases and other chronic conditions as the most high-value of services offered. This is possibly because it supports the long-term health and financial benefits, given the importance of decreasing care costs. Technology that enables virtual visits with eye doctors is a new but important service for making eye doctor appointments.

84% of people are highly or somewhat confident that eye doctors can identify serious chronic health conditions

Health plan executives recognize the importance of vision care for their members and predict that its value will grow after the pandemic. **Sixty-five percent of health plan executives believe the importance of vision care increase substantially or somewhat as a result of the pandemic.**

What services would make people more likely to make an eye doctor appointment?



## New interest in digital eye care options

COVID-19 spurred interest in digital, virtual and online care options, especially among young people.

- People under 40** are more likely to rate being able to use insurance to purchase eyewear online as having a high impact on purchasing vision insurance in the future (**fifty-five percent** of people under 40, vs. 40% of people ages 40–59, vs. 26% of people 60+)
- Forty-two percent** of people under 40 are more likely to say that having access to telemedicine so they can consult with doctors virtually/remotely (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) is a very important topic, vs. 35% of all people
- Seventy-four percent** of people under 40 say that having access to technology/tools for virtual visits would make them more likely to make an eye doctor appointment, vs. 67% of all people



**65%**

Health plan executives agree that telemedicine advancements are one of vision care's most important features for their members. **Sixty-five percent of health plan executives identified telemedicine advancements as having a high impact on each of the services covered by the vision insurance they offer to members, the top option chosen.**

## The social determinants of eye health

Lower-income households report facing hurdles to accessing eye care. This highlights how perceptions about the cost of eye care combined with the least highlights how perceptions about the cost of eye care combined with the least invasive and most cost-effective means of evaluating health.

The percentage of respondents, by income, who chose cost/affordability as the reason household members don't go to the eye doctor as often as they'd like:

**43%**

**36%**

**26%**

Incomes under \$35K

Incomes of \$35–75K

Incomes of \$75K+

Respondents in higher-income households are more likely to regularly see an eye doctor as a way to reduce healthcare costs:

**47%**

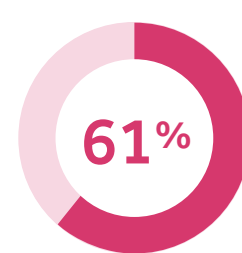
**42%**

**29%**

Incomes of \$75K+

Incomes of \$35–75K

Incomes under \$35K



Lower-income households are more likely to say vision insurance coverage would favorably impact the likelihood that their household would see an eye doctor more often: **61% of people with incomes under \$35K list having glasses, frames and eyewear covered by insurance as increasing the likelihood that their household would see an eye doctor more often, compared to 56% of all respondents.**

## Methodology

The Vision Wellness Study conducted online surveys with 525 consumers over the age of 18, as well as 17 health plan executives between October 30 and November 17, 2020. The survey asked their opinions of routine eye care, access to eye exams, eye care delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, preventative health measures, care costs and other topics related to managed vision care.