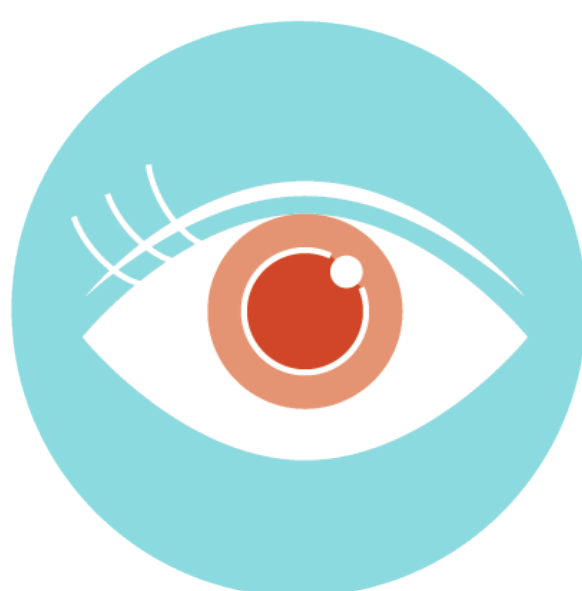


# Insurer perspectives on vision care

Findings from Versant Health's second annual Vision Wellness Study



**The healthcare industry experienced extraordinary challenges in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.** Health plan decision makers grappled with rapid responses to the crisis, while making sure their members were able to access the care and services that support their ongoing health and wellness. Vision care was no exception.

Health plan executives believe that vision care will be even more important moving forward, according to the second annual Vision Wellness Study. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of health plan executive survey respondents said the importance of vision care insurance to members will either somewhat or substantially increase as a result of the pandemic. In fact, more than half (53%) of the health plan executives surveyed said routine eye exams have a strong impact on enhancing member satisfaction with their total health. This is an encouraging statistic as we look to the future, given the critical role that eye exams play in evaluating overall health.

The Vision Wellness Study explored both consumer and health plan executive opinions on eye exams given the pandemic, including interest in technology that enables virtual eye care, methods of eye care cost management, and barriers to access to eye care.

## The clear value of virtual visit technology

Health plan executives are split on how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the way members access their vision care benefits. Still, they believe telemedicine advancements are having a positive impact on members' access to eye care.

**41%** Forty-one percent of health plan executive respondents believe COVID-19 has had no impact on how members are using their vision insurance coverage

**65%** Sixty-five percent of health plan executive respondents believe that telemedicine advancements have a positive impact on the services covered by the vision insurance offered to members

**65%** Sixty-five percent of health plan executive respondents say that members having access to technology, such as email, to contact their eye doctor for information, advice, appointments, etc. would make them more receptive to purchasing vision insurance

**76%**

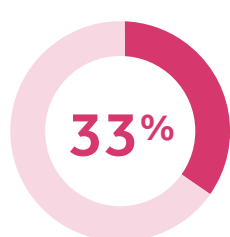
**Seventy-six percent** of health plan executive respondents believe members' use of alternatives to face-to-face contact with eye doctors—such as virtual visits—will somewhat or substantially increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



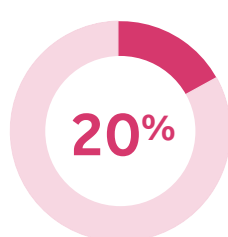
## Eye care cost management remains critical

Fewer consumers say affordability and lack of insurance are the reasons they don't see an eye doctor as much as they would like; yet, the affordability of care remains top of mind, and more health plan executives say transparency into care costs is the key to better managing healthcare in the future.

Why don't consumers or people go to the eye doctor as often as they'd like?



**Cost and affordability**  
(vs. 40% in the inaugural study)



**No vision insurance to cover costs**  
(vs. 28% in the inaugural study)



Top three healthcare topics cited as "very important" to consumers:

**55%** Identifying ways to decrease overall healthcare costs

**48%** Better understanding costs for different types of care they receive

**47%** Better ways to manage the costs of chronic conditions

Health plan executive respondents say that **transparency in health care costs** is the top option for better managing healthcare, including costs, in 2020 and beyond.



**Health plan executive respondents said that the use of evidence-based medicine is the most important approach vision insurers can take to proactively reduce overall healthcare costs.**

## The social determinants of vision care access

Health plan executives increasingly see the cost of transportation as a key obstacle for member access to eye care services, which could be a result of concerns about travel during the pandemic. Fewer health plan executives see lack of vision care coverage as an obstacle, but consumers from households with lower incomes are more likely to experience this barrier.

**88%** Eighty-eight percent of health plan executive respondents cite cost of, or lack of, transportation to eye doctors as the largest obstacle to members' ability to access eye care services—a 25% increase from the inaugural study at 63%

**53%** Limited or no coverage for eye care services is a significant obstacle to consumers accessing vision care: 53%, vs. 75% in the inaugural study



### Who has vision insurance?

While 69% of people say someone in their household has vision insurance, that number varies based on income.



Incomes of \$75K+

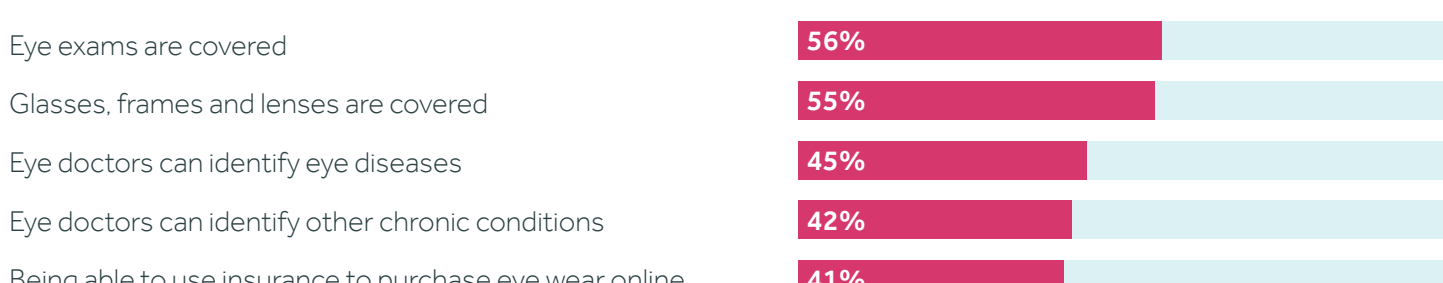


Incomes of \$35-75K



Incomes under \$35K

Respondents who do not have vision insurance stated the following conditions would influence their willingness to purchase it in the future:



## Methodology

The Vision Wellness Study consisted of online surveys with 525 consumers over the age of 18, as well as 17 health plan executives, conducted between October 30 and November 17, 2020. Survey respondents were asked about their opinions on 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.