



# Indiana Hospital Message Strategy Research Findings

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# Understanding Hoosiers' Perceptions of Hospitals

- The cost of health care in Indiana and across the country is impacting both the consumer pocketbook and the employer bottom line. Increasing attention is being paid to hospital costs and the role they play in health care inflation.
- Research objectives include:
  - Assess public perceptions of Indiana hospitals.
  - Identify the factors driving those perceptions.
  - Assess awareness of news stories about hospital costs.
  - Gauge reactions to message concepts about the role and value of Indiana hospitals.

# Methodology

- Two Phases of Research:
- **Exploratory phase**
  - Six focus groups held in late April of 2019
- **Evaluative phase**
  - Online survey conducted during late May/early June
  - Overall margin of error +/-4.2% across the total sample

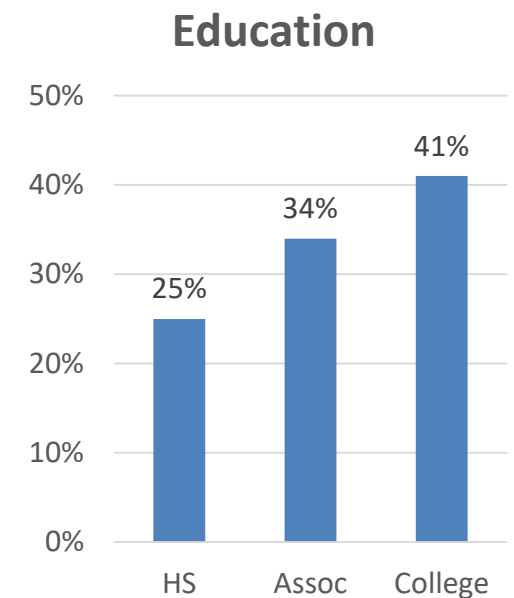
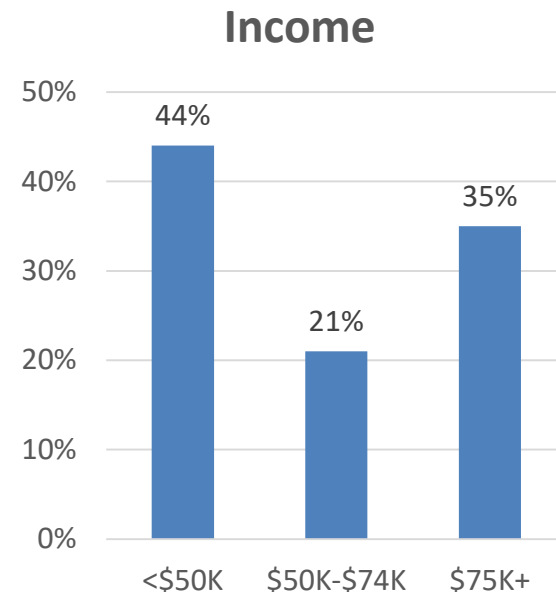
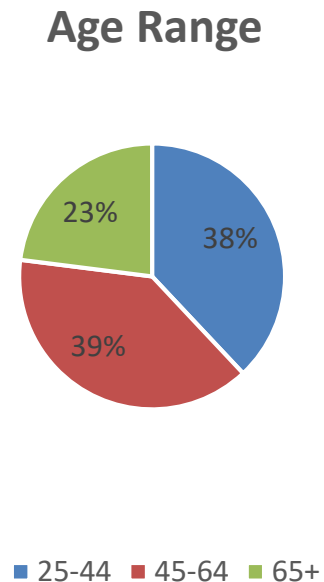
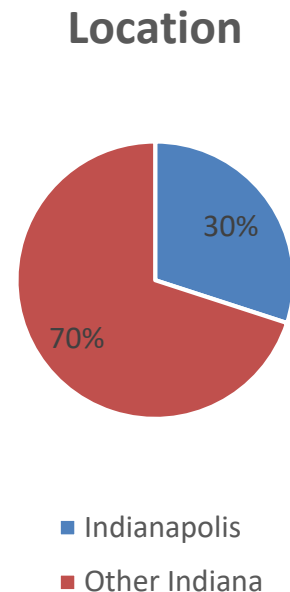
Detailed Research findings

# Focus Group Highlights

- Respondents consider health care to be a collection of distinct industries including health professionals, hospitals, payors, and pharma that have both shared and competing interests
- “Health care professionals generate the strongest impressions across all industries evaluated.
- Hospitals are rated highly for the social service aspects of what they do, but drop when business aspects are discussed. Impressions of payors and pharma generate considerably worse impressions.
  - Pharma ranks below the IRS
- Awareness of cost issues—premiums, deductibles, out of pockets is top of mind, and younger respondents are “less forgiving” when it comes to the cost and bureaucracy of health care.
- Messages that demonstrate value to the patient perform the best when it comes to burnishing category reputation: Diffusion of innovation, access, partnership/collaboration, new care models and focus on safety and quality.
- Messages about low government funding for Medicare/Medicaid patients uniformly perform the worst across all segments

# Respondent Profile

- Data are weighted to reflect the population distribution between the central Indiana area and the rest of the state.
- The sample is comprised of a representative mix by age, income, and education.



Q2. Do you live in one of the following counties: Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, or Shelby? (n=600)

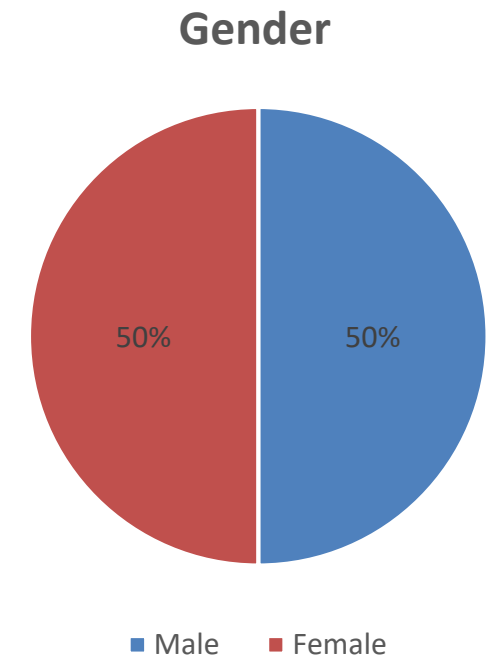
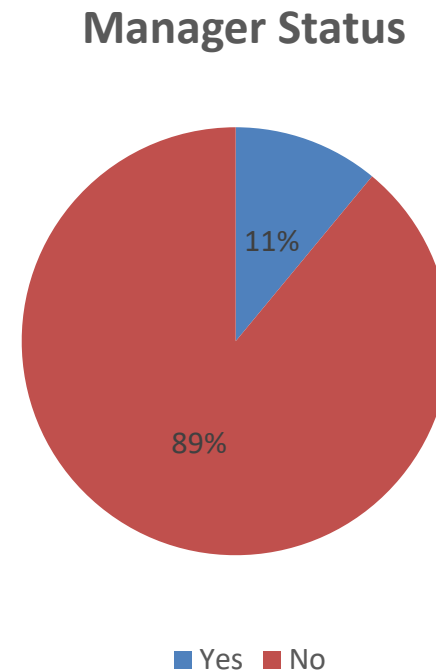
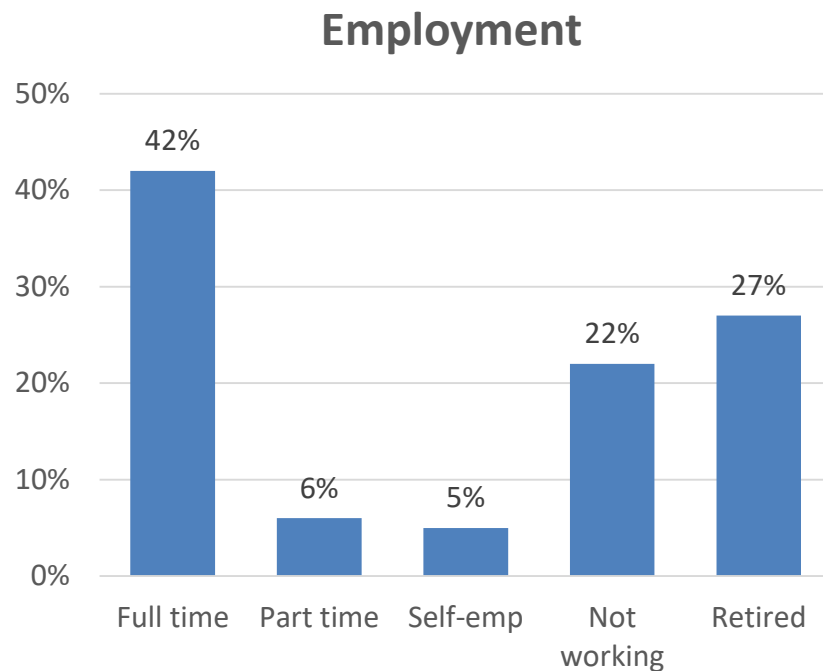
Q3. What is your exact age? (n=600)

Q7. Which of the following categories includes your current annual household income? (n=600)

Q8. Which is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=600)

# Respondent Profile

- Half of respondents (52%) are employed and a fourth are retired. A tenth (11%) work in a management capacity. Gender is evenly split.



Q4. Which of the following best describes your employment status? (n=600)

Q6. Are you involved in senior, corporate, or human resources management in your organization? (n=600)

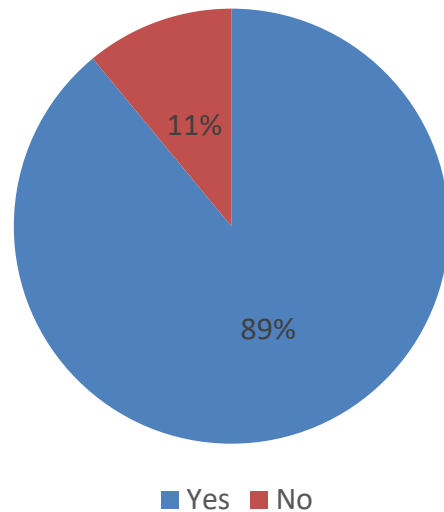
Q9. Are you...? (n=600)



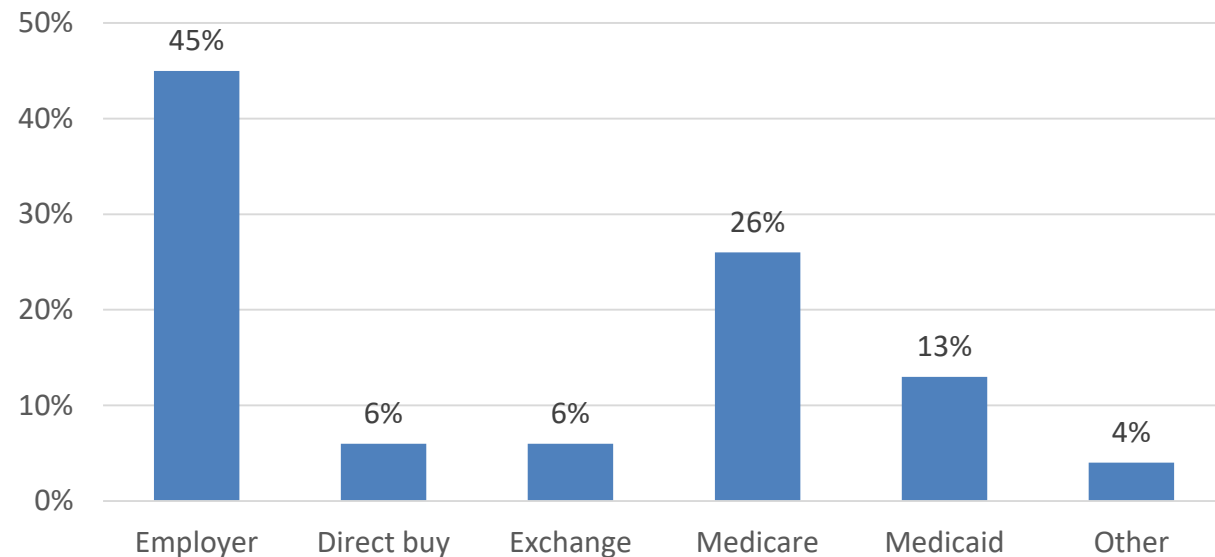
# Health Demographics

- The vast majority of respondents (89%) have some form of coverage for their medical expenses. Employer-sponsored coverage is the main source. The median reported individual deductible is \$1,200.

Medical Coverage



Source of Coverage



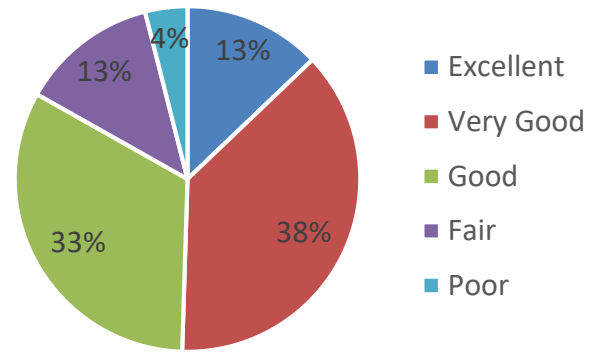
Q15. Do you have some type of coverage for your medical expenses? (n=600)

Q16. How did you obtain that insurance coverage? (n=536)

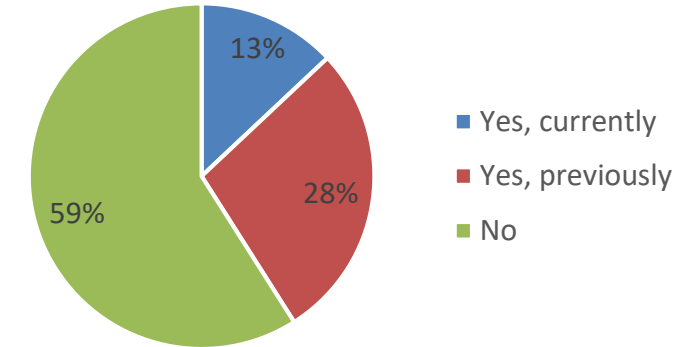
# Health Demographics

- Health status is mixed. Only half report their overall health as “excellent” or “very good” and half say that someone in their household has a chronic disease.
- Better than two-thirds report that someone in their household takes a prescription medication to manage an ongoing condition.
- Nearly half (41%) report caregiving experience.

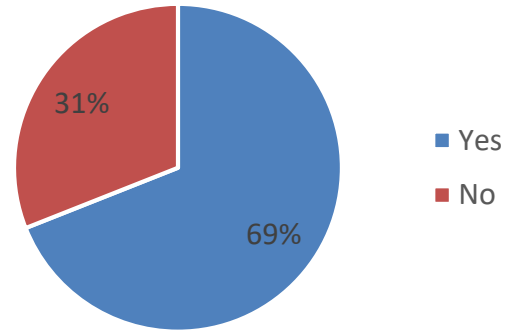
Overall Health Status



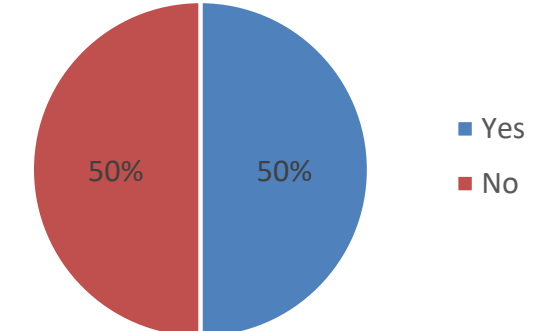
Caregiver Status



Prescription



Ongoing Condition



Q22. How would you describe your overall health status? (n=600)

Q23. Are you currently caring for or making health care decisions for someone with a medical, behavioral, disability, or other condition? (n=600)

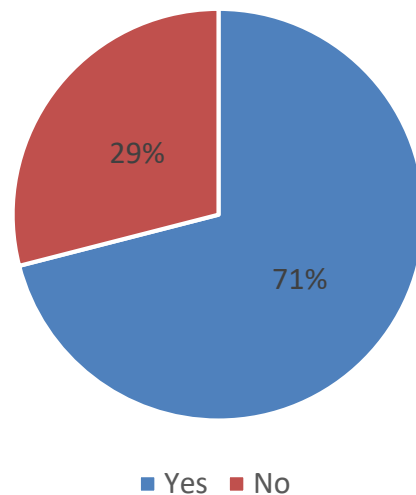
Q26. Have you or anyone else in your household been diagnosed with a medical condition that requires ongoing physician care for monitoring and management? (n=600)

Q27. Do you or anyone else in your immediate household take a prescription medication on a regular basis in order to treat an ongoing condition? (n=600)

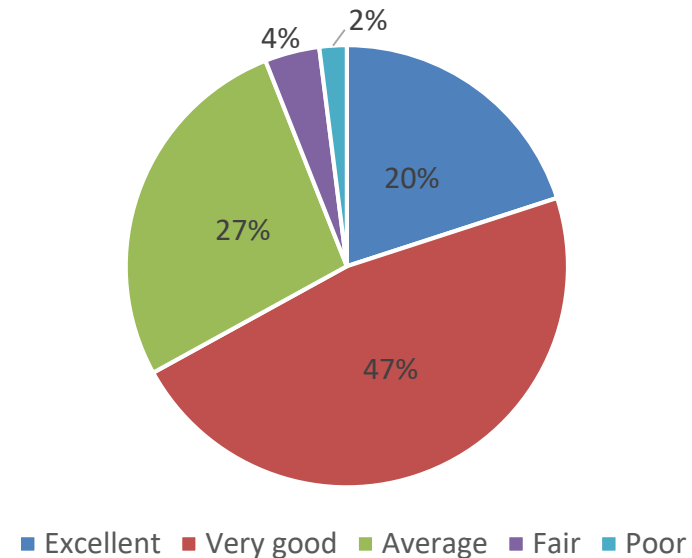
# Health Demographics

- The majority (71%) have utilized a hospital in the past two years—averaging three encounters (median). Respondents are mixed about the overall performance of the health system in their area. A fifth (20%) rate it as excellent, however, a significant minority (33%) rate it as average at best. Higher earners and college graduates all rate the local health system higher than their counterparts.

### Hospital Utilization



### Overall Performance



Q24. Have you or an immediate family member in your household used any type of hospital service in the past two years? (n=600)

Q25. Approximately how many times have you been to the hospital (for your own care or accompanying a family member) in the past two years? (n=427)

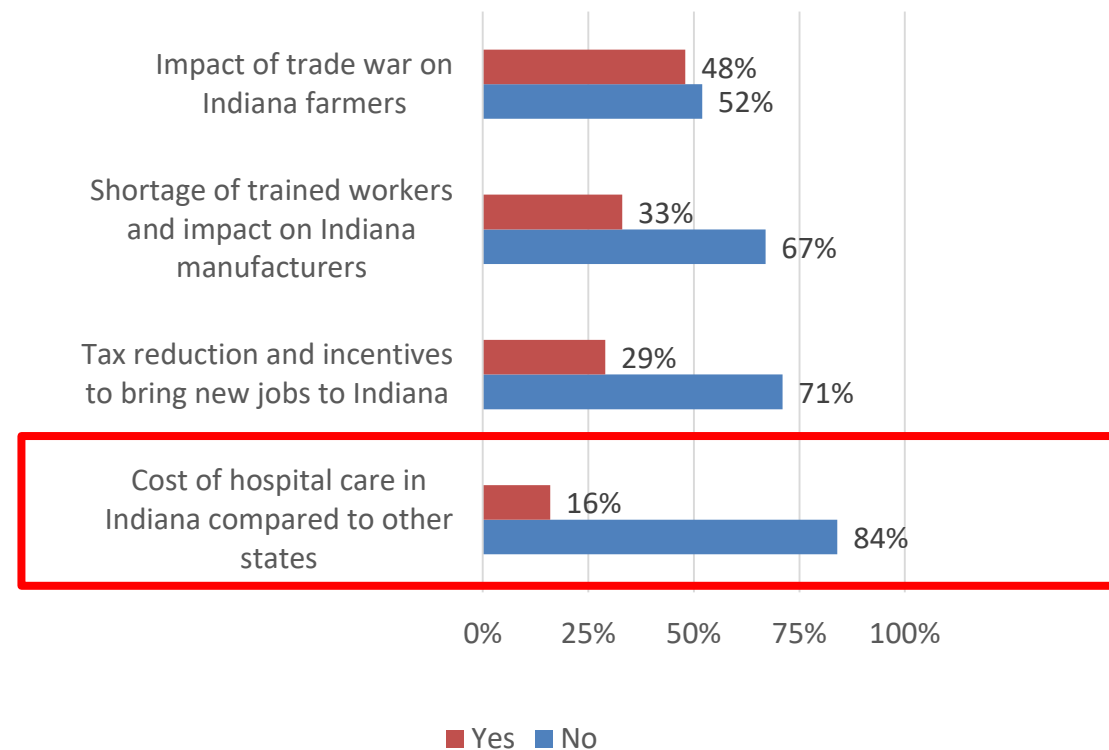
Q10. How would you grade the overall performance of the health care providers (doctors, hospitals, and health plans) available in your area? (n=600)

# Recall of News Stories

- There is low recall of stories among the general public about the cost of hospital care in Indiana—even on an aided basis, only 16% recall anything about this topic, BUT . . .

Unaided Recall of Hospital News Stories	
<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Total</u>
New facilities/mergers	8%
Service line developments	7%
Quality of care	5%
Patient stories	4%
Promotion of services	3%
Outreach/fundraising	2%
<b>Cost of hospital care in IN</b>	<b>2%</b>
Other	13%
None	59%

## Aided Recall of News Stories



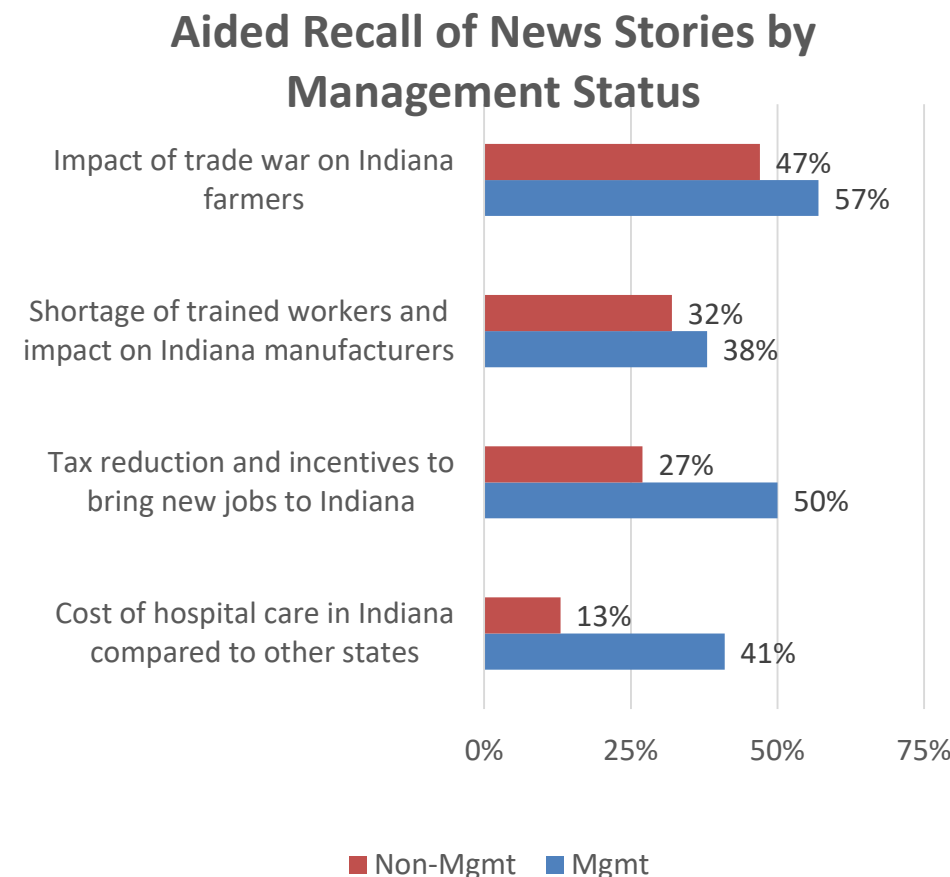
Q11. Which news stories do you recall about Indiana hospitals within the past month? (n=600)

Q12a-d. Do you recall seeing any news stories about . . .? (n=600)

# Recall of News Stories

- ... respondents in management roles have report substantially higher aided awareness of news stories about Indiana hospital pricing as do Central Indiana residents.

Unaided Recall of Hospital News Stories by Management Status		
<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Mgmt</u>	<u>NonMgmt</u>
New facilities/mergers	14%	8%
Service line developments	2%	8%
Quality of care	8%	4%
Patient stories	6%	4%
Promotion of services	6%	3%
Outreach/fundraising	--	2%
Cost of hospital care in IN	5%	2%
Other	18%	11%
None	41%	61%

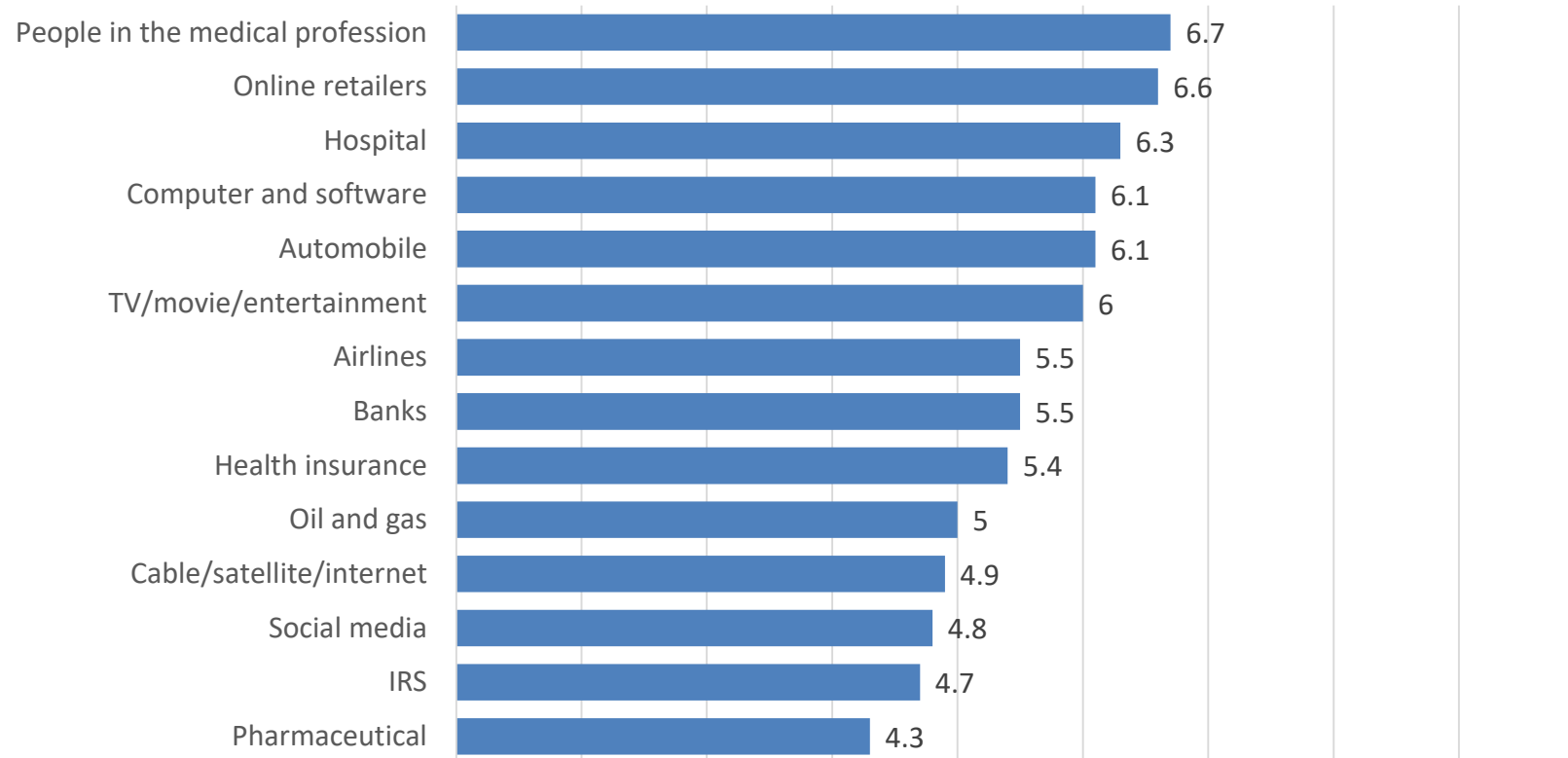


Q11. Which news stories do you recall about Indiana hospitals within the past month? (n=600)  
 Q12a-d. Do you recall seeing any news stories about . . . ? (n=600)

# Industry Ratings

- Men, higher utilizers, and respondents who report ongoing medical conditions and/or prescription drug usage all rate hospitals higher than their counterparts.

## Industry Ratings



# Evaluating the Impact of Hospital Messages

- Based on the findings of the initial focus groups, a series of brief message concepts were refined and developed for quantitative testing. The message concepts were evaluated in two ways:
  - Respondents evaluated each message in isolation, rating them for the degree of positive/negative impact they had on their overall impression of the hospital industry.
  - Second, the messages were put through a MaxDiff Scaling exercise to identify the degree and magnitude of appeal.

# Hospital Message Concepts Evaluated

1. Indiana hospitals invest in the latest technology and treatments so that Hoosiers have better access to care, better outcomes, and healthier lives.
2. Indiana hospitals are an important safety net resource for all Hoosiers, available 24/7 regardless of the patient's ability to pay.
3. Hospitals across Indiana work together to improve quality and patient safety, including reducing infection rates and addressing critical public health issues such as helping people to quit smoking and reduce infant mortality.
4. Indiana hospitals are part of the foundation of our communities. They provide jobs and investments that have a positive ripple effect on the local economy and they train young people for well-paying careers in health care.
5. Indiana hospitals are the backbone of one of the nation's best health care systems. Hoosiers don't have to leave Indiana to access world class services in heart and cancer care, orthopedics and other specialty services. Indiana hospitals bring the best medical care to the people of our state.



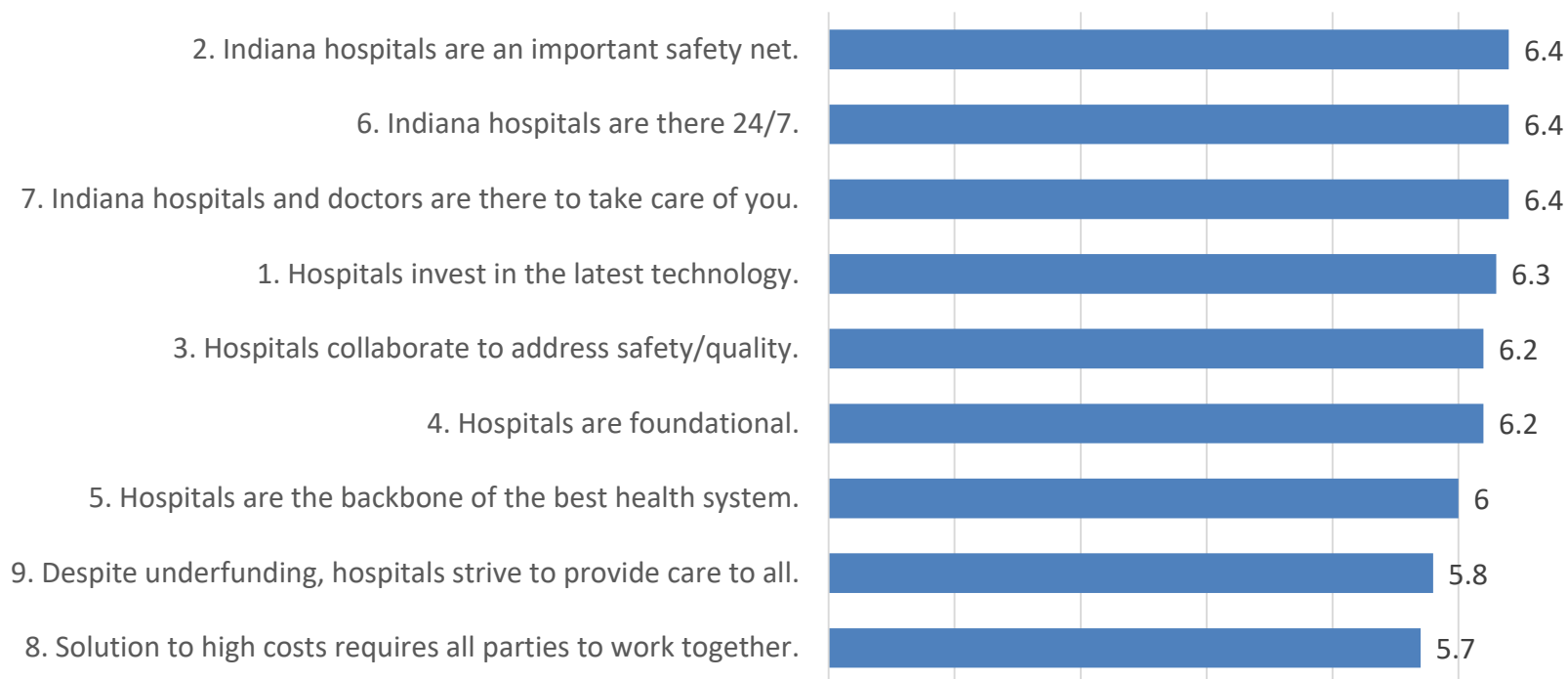
# Hospital Message Concepts Evaluated

6. You can count on Indiana hospitals to be there when you need them, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, providing hope and healing. They are there to bring a new life into the world and to provide care in an emergency. Preserving their existence is vital.
7. Indiana hospitals and their highly trained doctors, nurses, therapists, and technicians are there for a shared mission— to take care of you when you're sick, help keep you well and give you hope for a healthy future.
8. Indiana hospitals can't tackle the rising cost of health care—and the burden it places on Hoosiers—by themselves. It will take health insurance plans, pharmaceutical companies, other stakeholders, and hospitals working together to address health care costs and affordability.
9. Even though the government underfunds hospitals— they receive only 85% of the cost of caring for Medicare patients and even far less for Medicaid patients—hospitals strive to provide the highest-quality services for anyone who needs care.

# Impact of Hospital Message Concepts

- Messages about **access, people** and **investment** generate the **strongest overall ratings**. Messages related to cost and government underpayment generate the least appeal. Higher utilizers and those with chronic disease/prescription drug usage rate nearly all messages higher.

**Impact of Hospital Message Concepts**  
(Mean impression score (10=positive impact, 1=negative impact))



# MaxDiff Scaling Evaluation

- Messages about people, access, the quality of Indiana's health care system, and investments in technology have the greatest impact on category image.
- Messages about cost and underfunding have the least impact. In fact messaging about people and access have more than double the impact on category impression compared to cost/underfunding messages.

MaxDiff Scaling Index Scores	
<u>Message</u>	<u>Total</u>
7. Indiana hospitals and doctors are there to take care of you.	139
6. Indiana hospitals are there 24/7.	130
2. Indiana hospitals are an important safety net.	114
5. Hospitals are backbone of the best health system.	111
1. Hospitals invest in the latest technology.	108
3. Hospitals collaborate to address quality/safety.	89
4. Hospitals are part of the foundation of the community.	85
9. Despite low government payment, hospitals strive to provide care to all.	64
8. Reducing health care costs requires industry to work together.	60

# Key Takeaways

- 1. Health care and related cost issues are top of mind for Hoosiers.** The median individual deductible among those who have one is \$1,200 and 15% report deductibles above \$2,000. Further, health status is a challenge for many. Half (49%) rate their overall health as being average at best, with 50% reporting some type of ongoing medical condition in their household, 69% taking prescription medication to manage an ongoing condition, and 41% having had to manage their lives around caregiving responsibilities.
- 2. Experience with hospitals is high (71% reported utilization in the past two years, three encounters on average).** Health system performance ratings overall are relatively good (67% rating the system as excellent/very good), though they vary by region.
- 3. Recall of news stories about hospital costs in Indiana is low among the general public, but is higher among managers.** Only 2% are able to mention the story on an unaided basis and 16% recall the story when prompted. However, aided recall among people in managerial roles is considerably higher (41% vs. 13% among other members of the public).

# Key Takeaways

4. **Health care professionals—doctors, nurses, therapists and technicians—enjoy a wealth of equity among the public.** The people who work in health care generate category impression scores far above all other industries studied.
5. **Image equity for hospitals, however, is split.** Messaging that speaks to access, performance and services drives up consumer images of the sector. However, issues related to cost, inefficiency, and poor service/experience drive perceptions that the industry is characterized by profit-driven corporations that prioritize financial performance.
6. **The hospital sector is more vulnerable with certain consumer segments.** Younger consumers, lower utilizers, healthier consumers (based on self-reported overall health status, absence of chronic disease and no use of prescription medication for an ongoing condition); and those with lower educational attainment/low-moderate income levels tend to give the overall local health system performance lower marks in comparison to their counterparts.

# Key Takeaways

- 7. Messages that emphasize health care professionals, access, and technology have the most positive impact on the public's perception of hospitals.** Messages related to access, safety net, compassionate/committed professionals, and investment in technologies/new treatment speak to the core expectations that the public has about the category and also about what they feel hospitals do best.
- 8. Messages referencing cost or attempting to explain cost drivers and government underfunding have a negative impact on category image.** As indicated in the focus groups, the public is quick to point out that high costs are their reality and burden and don't want to hear justification from hospitals. Most say that part of the mission of hospitals is to serve the underserved and they don't accept that as a justification for high costs.

# Implications

- 1. Don't play defense.** Messages that challenge the RAND study's methodology or implications will fall flat in the court of public opinion. The public has limited interest in a methodological debate when they are acutely aware of their own skyrocketing out-of-pocket costs and the burden it places on their households. The idea that hospitals would challenge this observation does not ring true.
- 2. People, innovations, investments.** Execute a message strategy that focuses on qualities identified and valued by the public—health care professionals, innovations, and investments. This line of messaging has the greatest potential for burnishing and defending the image of Indiana hospitals with the general public, based on this research. It leverages the equity that hospitals have with public and delivers clear set of benefits to both community and individual.
- 3. There is no "one size fits all" message.** The communication strategy must be segmented by audience. Consumer messaging will differ based on age, health care utilization and geography. Other key audiences include legislators, employers and potentially hospital employees. All have different messaging needs.

# Taking Action – Next Steps

- Understand that we are talking to multiple audiences
  - Audiences include: Legislators, employers, business community, hospital employees and their families, patients, and consumers
  - Tailor messages to the audience
- Short term: Aggressively defend hospitals from false/misleading reports
  - Submit op-ed pieces
  - Actively engage with and educate media
- Longer term: Develop ongoing communications plan highlighting benefits of hospitals
  - Use research to inform messages, topics
- Actively seek, share positive stories



# Potential Messages by Audience

## Draft Message Strategy Outline

<u>Message Element</u>	<u>The Public</u>	<u>Employers</u>	<u>Legislators</u>	<u>Hospital Employees</u>
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring/ compassionate</li> <li>• Your human touchpoint</li> <li>• Care that goes above and beyond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We understand the challenge of high costs —we’re also large employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospitals are some of the largest employers in Indiana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are at the center of what we do - - Provide care for patients and their families</li> <li>• You make a difference in people’s lives</li> </ul>
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technologies/ treatments that improve the quality of life</li> <li>• Care that is accessible</li> <li>• Collaborating on safety, quality, reducing health risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New care models such as direct-to-employer</li> <li>• Healthier employees, less absenteeism, lower cost</li> <li>• Collaborating on Improving quality and safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indiana has a world class health system</li> <li>• New care models such as direct-to-employer</li> <li>• Collaborating to Improve quality, safety</li> <li>• Public health challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are part of an organization that believes in innovation to better serve our patients and communities</li> </ul>
Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New tech/ treatments close to home</li> <li>• Investment in community to be there for all, 24/7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in access make the lives of your employees easier, better employee health for you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in our communities despite funding and public health challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We make investments to better serve our patients and their families</li> </ul>