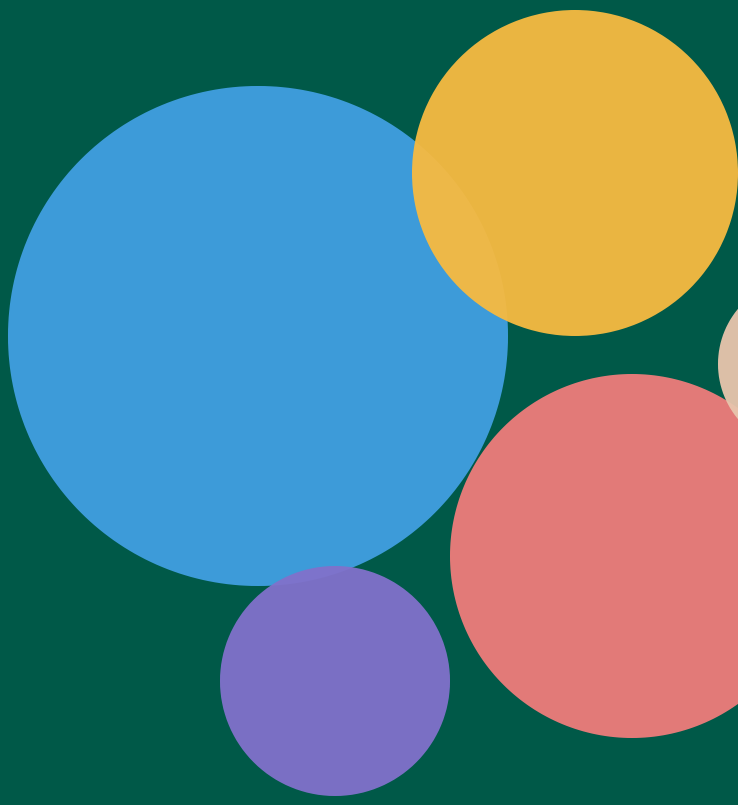
OUTCARE HEALTH · RESEARCH BRIEF

LGBTQ+ Health Now

Key findings from OutCare Voices, a national survey of 1,092 LGBTQ+ people and affirming providers, 2025–2026.



OutCare Health

National LGBTQ+ health equity nonprofit · outcarehealth.org

November 2026

AT A GLANCE

LGBTQ+ communities are staying connected to care through individual providers, not the system

OutCare Health asked its national community of LGBTQ+ people and affirming providers how they are experiencing healthcare today. **672 LGBTQ+ people** and **420 affirming providers** were included, along with more than 5,000 written reflections.

56%

of LGBTQ+ people rate their overall health fair or poor; 66% say the same of their mental health

60%

have avoided care in the past due to affirming provider scarcity

54%

currently fear being denied care because of their LGBTQ+ identity

57% vs 22%

trust their own providers vs. the healthcare system

74%

of LGBTQ+ people under 25 say politics make them less likely to seek care

95% vs 63%

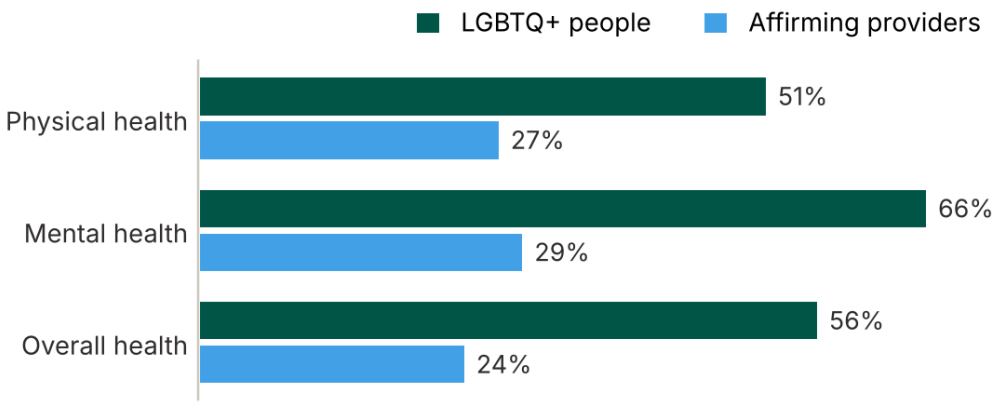
feel affirmed by their PCP when found through OutCare Health's OutList vs. elsewhere

What we learned

- **Health needs are high.** 50% identify as disabled, 28% have experienced homelessness, and 66% rate their mental health fair or poor.
- **Trust lives in relationships.** LGBTQ+ people trust the provider in front of them at more than twice the rate they trust the system around them.
- **Fear is keeping people out of care.** Fear of discrimination, the political climate, and a shortage of affirming providers all drive avoidance, especially among trans and gender diverse people and young adults.
- **Affirming care changes the experience.** Patients who found their primary care provider through OutCare Health's affirming provider directory reported better visits, more time, and improved health.
- **Providers are committed and under strain.** 80% feel more compelled to be visible as affirming; nearly half feel more cautious doing so.

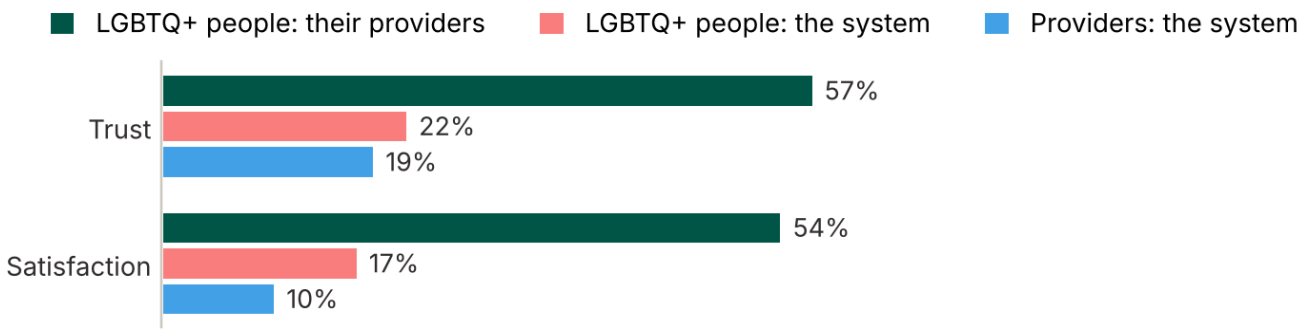
FINDING 1

Health needs are high, and trust in the system is low



Fair or poor self-rated health. LGBTQ+ people n=672; providers n=420.

More than 50% of LGBTQ+ people rate their physical and overall health fair or poor, and 66% say the same of their mental health. Affirming providers, who are older and have higher incomes, report fair or poor health at about half those rates.

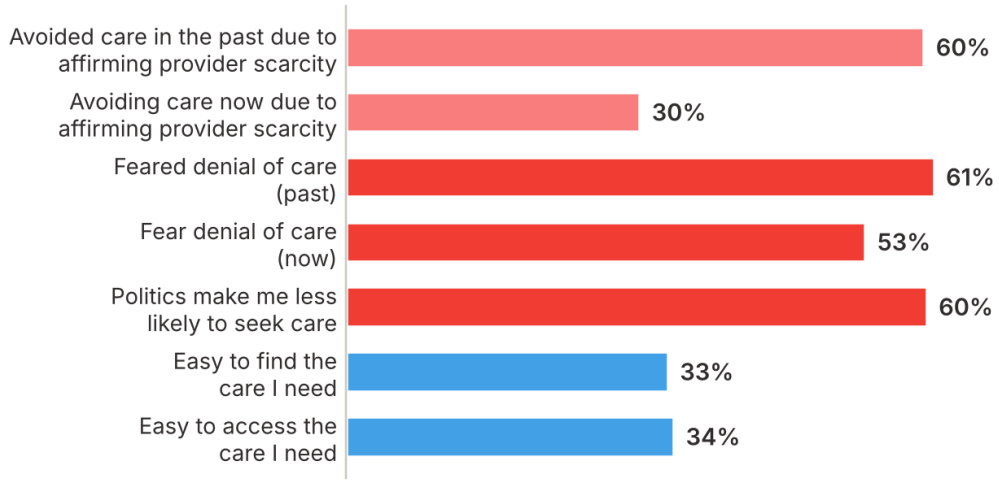


Agree or strongly agree.

LGBTQ+ people trust their own providers (57%) far more than the healthcare system (22%), and 67% are dissatisfied with the system. Providers are even more skeptical of the system they work in: 62% distrust it and 78% are dissatisfied.

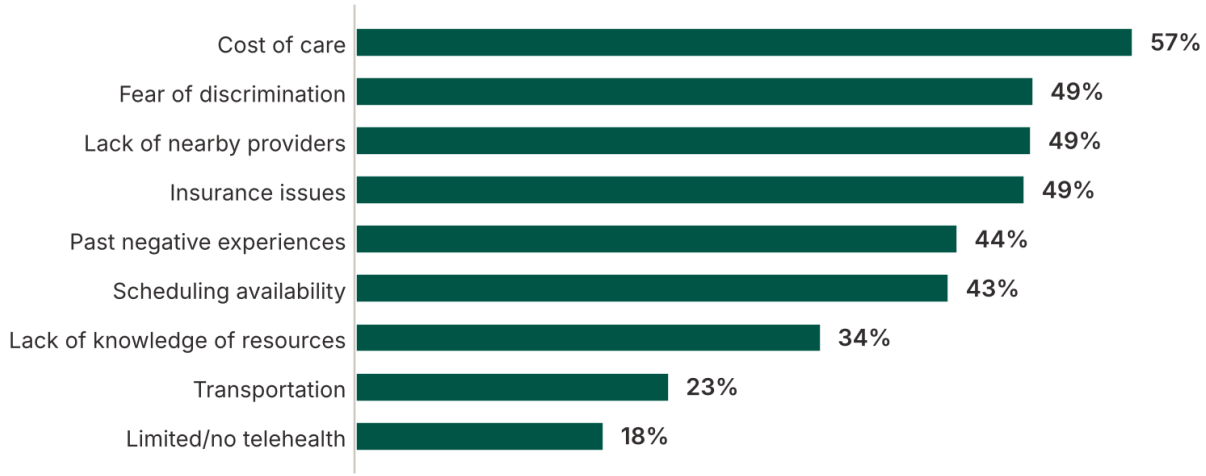
FINDING 2

Fear and scarcity keep people out of care



LGBTQ+ people who agree or strongly agree.

60% of LGBTQ+ people have avoided care in the past due to affirming provider scarcity, and 30% are avoiding care now. Only 33% say the care they need is easy to find. The average respondent reports 3.7 separate barriers, led by cost (57%), fear of discrimination (49%), a lack of nearby affirming providers (49%), and insurance problems (49%).

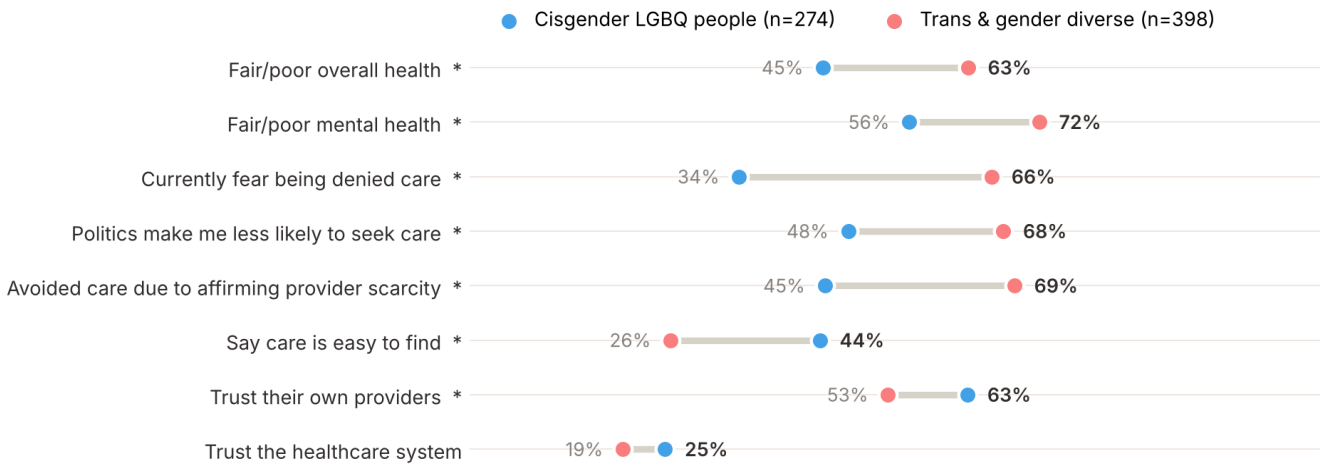


Barriers faced when accessing affirming care (select all; n=635).

> *"It makes me scared to go to the emergency room because I'm afraid of the way I would be treated by providers that I don't know."*
>
> LGBTQ+ respondent

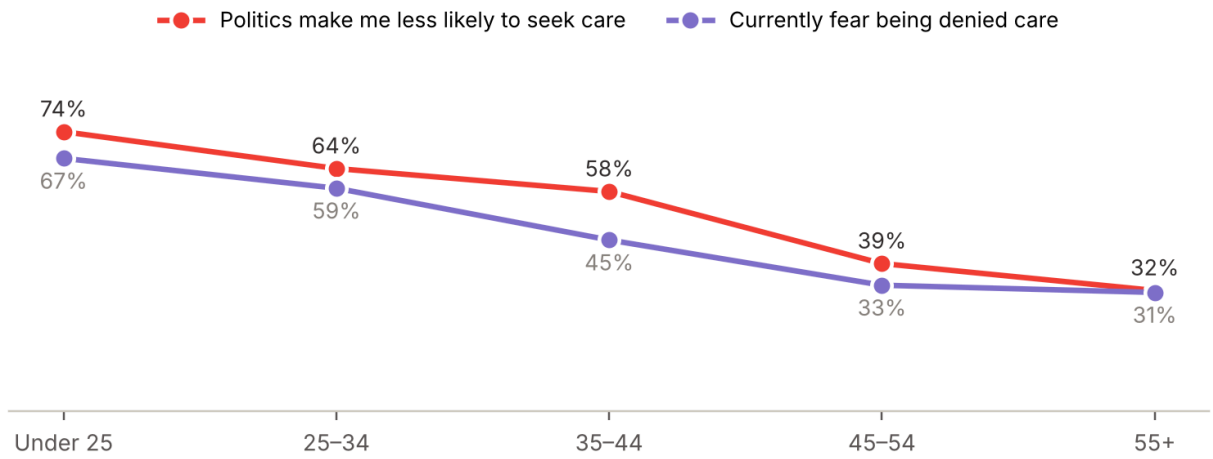
FINDING 3

The burden falls hardest on those with the least access



Trans and gender diverse (n=398) vs. cisgender LGBQ people (n=274). * p<.05.

Trans and gender diverse people are nearly twice as likely as cisgender LGBQ people to fear being denied care (66% vs. 34%) and far less likely to find care easily (26% vs. 44%). People earning under $50,000 and disabled people also report significantly worse health, more fear, and more difficulty finding care; people of color report significantly more fear of being denied care (60% vs. 50%).

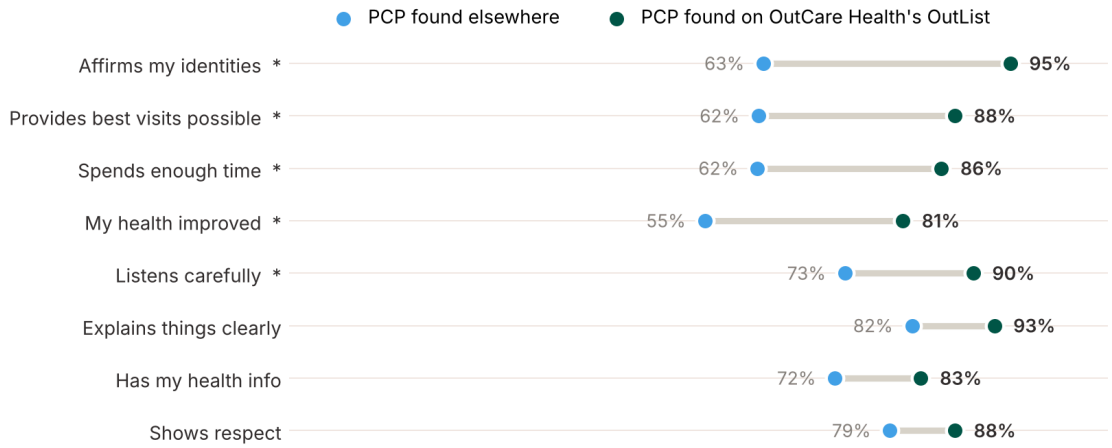


By age group. Steady decline across age groups; test for trend p<.001 for both measures.

Age is the strongest predictor of political deterrence: 74% of LGBTQ+ people under 25 say politics make them less likely to seek care, compared with 32% of those 55 and older.

FINDING 4

Affirming care changes the experience of care



Patients agreeing with each statement about their primary care provider: found on OutCare Health's OutList vs. elsewhere. * p<.05.

Patients who found their primary care provider through OutCare Health's affirming provider directory were far more likely to say their provider affirms their identities (95% vs. 63%), spends enough time with them (86% vs. 62%), provides the best visits possible (88% vs. 62%), listens carefully (90% vs. 73%), and has improved their health (81% vs. 55%). After adjusting for demographics (gender identity, race, income, age, and disability), they had about 11 times the odds of feeling affirmed and about 4 times the odds of saying their health improved, along with:

~5x

the odds of saying their provider spends enough time

~4x

the odds of saying their provider gives the best visits possible

~3x

the odds of saying their provider listens carefully

FINDING 5

Affirming providers are committed, and under strain

The political climate creates a visibility paradox for the providers who offer affirming care. 80% of affirming providers say it makes them more compelled to be publicly visible, while 47% feel more cautious about it, rising to 61% among trans and gender diverse providers. Supportive workplaces matter: 88% say their practice supports LGBTQ+ health equity, and 83% feel safe there.

> *"People need us, now more than ever."*
>
> Provider respondent

WHAT IT MEANS

Where health organizations can act

- **Train everyone who interacts with patients and members,** from front desk to care management, and track completion.
  > **Solution: Access OutCare Health's Group Training**
- **Make affirming providers visible and easy to find,** with directory information people can trust and filters that reflect cost, insurance, telehealth, and accessibility.
  > **Solution: Collaborate with OutCare Health's Provider Directory**
- **Get intake and SOGI data right,** with privacy practices patients can see.
  > **Solution: Consult with OutCare Health on Best Practices**
- **Connect people to care, not just to a list,** through navigation that addresses distrust, cost, and delayed care together.
  > **Solution: Partner with OutCare Health's Care Navigation Services**
- **Support the affirming workforce** with peer connection, referral pathways, and safe workplaces.
  > **Solution: Consult with OutCare Health on Best Practices**

3.7

barriers to affirming care reported by the average respondent

30%

of LGBTQ+ people are avoiding care now due to affirming provider scarcity

83%

of affirming providers feel safe and affirmed at work, a key buffer

"There are more of us than it seems, even in highly conservative areas. I have found helpful directories to hopefully find care in my area."

LGBTQ+ respondent, OutCare Voices

ABOUT US

About OutCare Health

OutCare Health is a national 501(c)(3) health equity organization advancing affirming care for LGBTQ+ communities, with a dedicated focus on transgender, gender diverse, and intersex people. Founded in 2015 and led by LGBTQ+ clinicians and health equity leaders, OutCare partners with health plans, health systems, employers, public agencies, and community organizations to find, train, and connect people to affirming care.

Affirming provider data

The OutList, a national directory of 7,000+ LGBTQ+ affirming providers, available for directories, search filters, and network analysis.

Workforce training

Accredited LGBTQ+ and TGI affirming care training, including California SB 923 training, branded organization portals, and live sessions.

Care navigation

Navigators who connect people to affirming providers and the resources around cost, coverage, and access.

Research and experience design

Community-informed research, intake and SOGI consulting, and member and patient experience design.

7,000+
affirming providers on the OutList

100,000+
healthcare professionals trained

30,000+
people reached online each month

28
peer-reviewed publications

Learn more or start a conversation at outcarehealth.org.

Source: OutCare Voices survey, April 2025–November 2026; 672 LGBTQ+ people and 420 affirming providers after quality screening. Convenience sample, not given in a clinical setting; cross-sectional, self-reported data show associations, not causation. Full methods are available in the OutCare Voices white paper. OutCare does not provide clinical care.