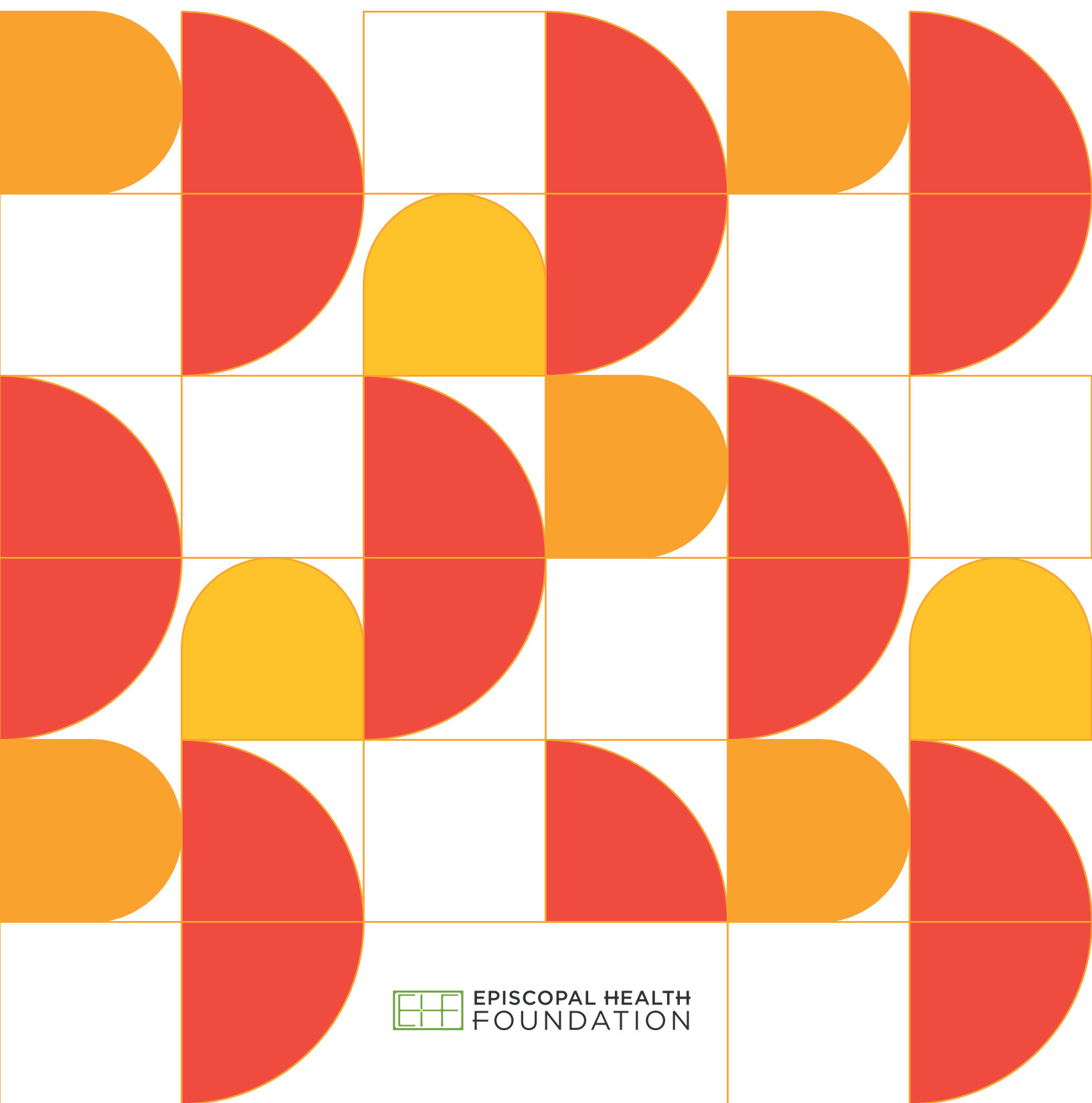


Texans Experience Over the Years

A Longitudinal Analysis of Texas Health Policy Poll Results

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TEXANS' VIEWS ON STATE HEALTH POLICY: TRENDS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2018-2022

Texas state lawmakers are scheduled to address a number of health policy issues in the new legislative session. In a state with stark disparities in health outcomes and life expectancies between racial and ethnic groups – and one of few states that has not expanded Medicaid – Texas legislators must consider the health priorities of different groups as they make, at times, contentious decisions.

When asked about priorities for the state budget, Texans of all racial and ethnic groups supported increased spending on health care programs. Of the groups surveyed, the greatest proportion of Black, non-Hispanic respondents supported increased spending across all years (with support rising from 77% in 2018 to 89% in 2022), but support increased among all groups (from 46% to 59% among Hispanic Texans and from 53% to 59% among White, non-Hispanic Texans).

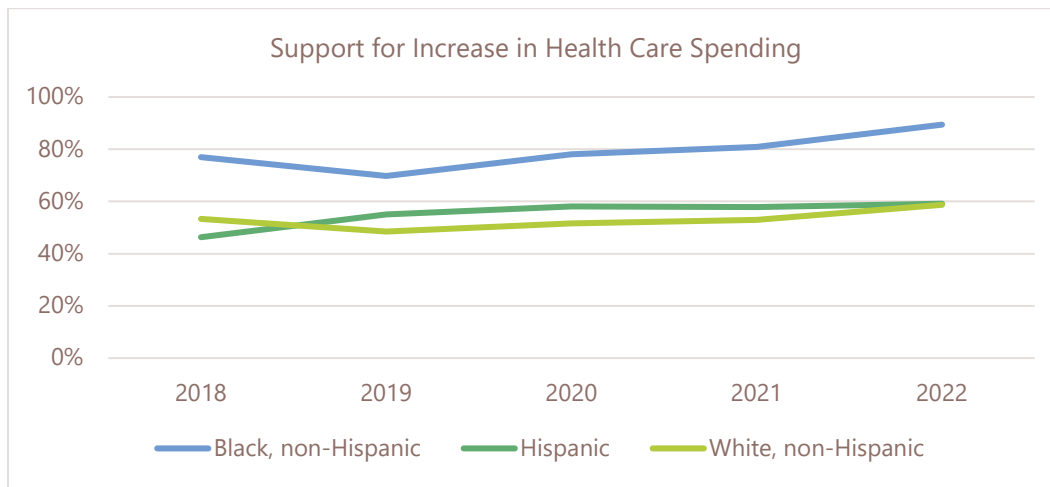
Lowering the amount that individuals pay for health care, lowering the cost of prescription drugs, increasing access to health insurance, and reducing maternal mortality are high health policy priorities across racial and ethnic groups. On other health policy topics, prioritization varied between groups. In general, a higher proportion of Black, non-Hispanic Texans responded that each health policy issue was a top priority. For example, funding for mental health programs was consistently identified as a top priority more frequently by Black, non-Hispanic Texans (support ranging 65-84%) than by Hispanic Texans (46-51%) or White, non-Hispanic Texans (43-54%). Prioritization of improving access to hospitals in rural areas was also supported by the majority of Black, non-Hispanic respondents over the years, ranging from 51-71%, while White, non-Hispanic Texans' support for this issue was substantially lower (29-47%) and Hispanic Texans' support typically fell in between (47-61%).

Over 60% of all respondent groups in each year maintained a very or somewhat favorable opinion of Medicaid. White, non-Hispanic Texans' favorable opinion of the program was consistently lowest of the groups surveyed but remained high. More than half of respondents in each group supported Medicaid expansion. Support was particularly strong among Black, non-Hispanic respondents (84-90%) and, to a somewhat lesser degree, Hispanic respondents (71-82%). While support was lowest among White, non-Hispanic respondents, it increased from 54% in 2018 to 62% in 2022.

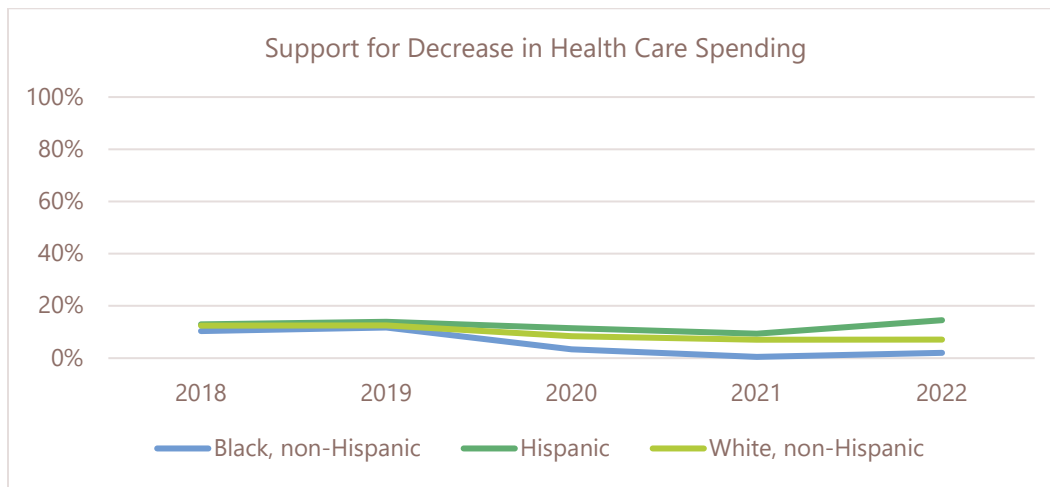
Overall Support for Increasing Health Spending

Survey Question: Thinking about priorities in the state budget, do you think the state legislature should increase or decrease spending on **health care programs** or keep it about the same?

Overall, Texas residents tended to support an **increase** in spending on health care programs in the state budget. This is particularly true among Black, non-Hispanic Texans, whose support for increased spending ranged from 70-89%, compared to Hispanic residents (46-59%) and White, non-Hispanic residents (48-59%).



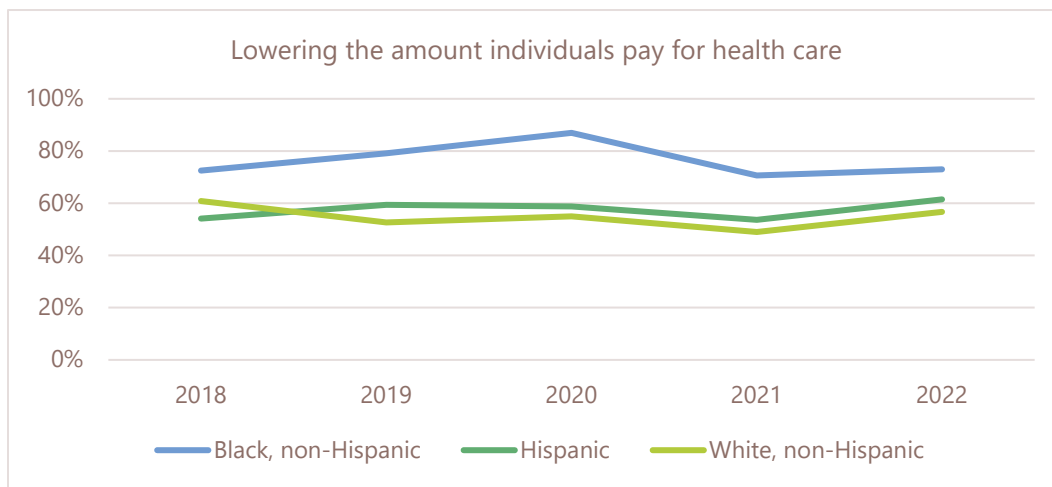
A minority of Texans supported a **decrease** in spending on health care programs. Black, non-Hispanic Texans’ support for decreased health care spending dropped precipitously from 10% in 2018 to 2% in 2022. White, non-Hispanic Texans’ support for decreased health care spending approximately halved from 2018 to 2022, while Hispanic Texans’ levels of support remained similar.



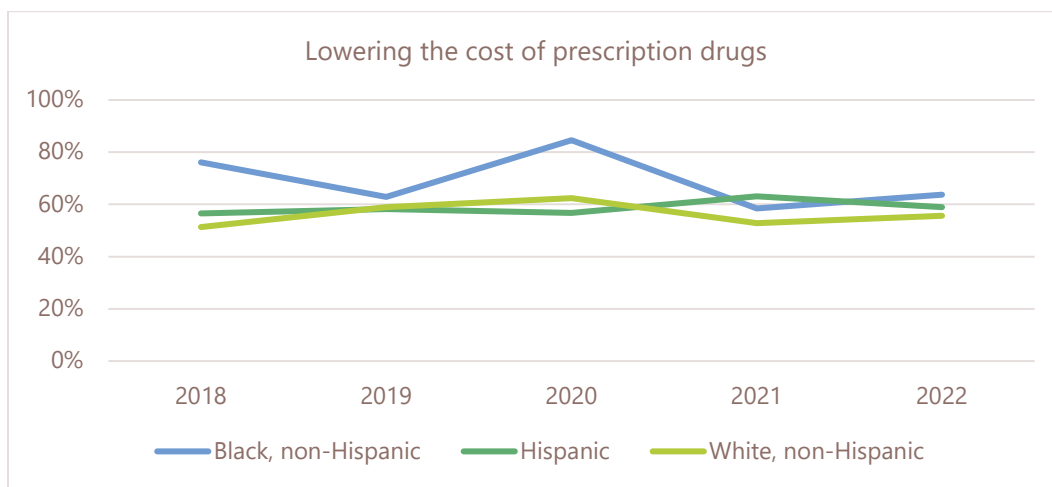
Identifying Top Policy Priorities

Survey Question: What about ____? Should that be a top priority for the Texas legislature, important but not a top priority, not too important, or should it not be done?

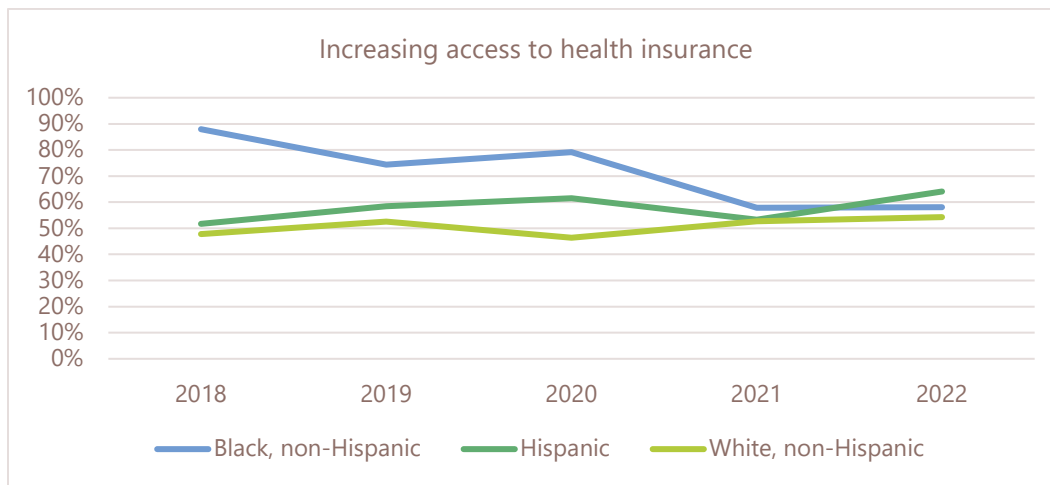
Lowering the amount individuals pay for health care was a high priority across groups from 2018-2022. Black, non-Hispanic respondents consistently identified this as a top priority more than other groups, with support remaining above 70% from 2018-2022. Hispanic Texans’ support for lowering individual payment for health care increased from 54% in 2018 to 61% in 2022. Over half of White, non-Hispanic Texans considered this issue a top priority except in 2021, when support fell to 49%.



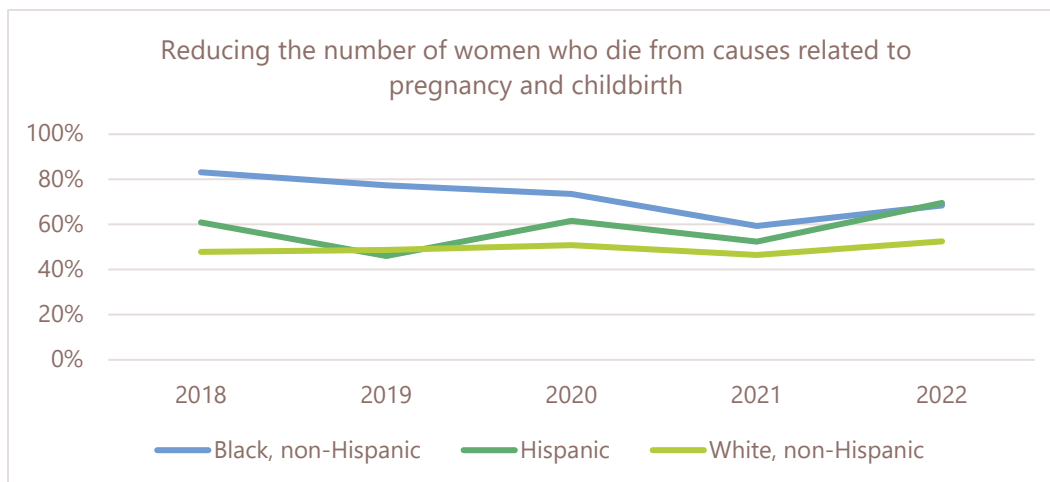
Black, non-Hispanic Texans’ support for **lowering the cost of prescription drugs** has varied widely from year to year since 2018, peaking at 85% in 2020 then dropping to a low of 58% the following year. Mostly recently, in 2022, 64% of Black, non-Hispanic respondents named it a top priority, similar to other groups surveyed.



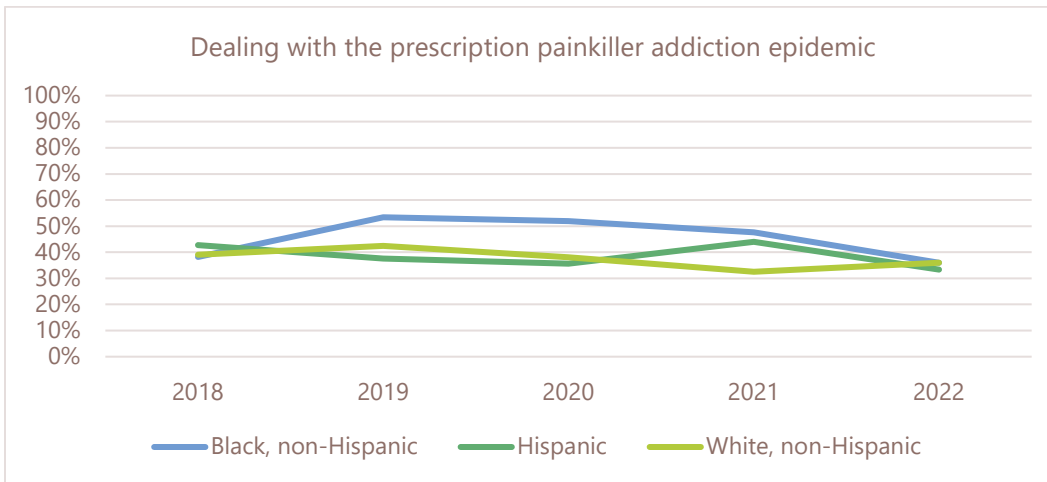
While significant percentages of Texans across groups said that **increasing access to health insurance** was a top priority from 2018-2022, the proportion of Black, non-Hispanic respondents who prioritized it dropped notably from 88% in 2018 to 58% in 2022. In 2022, a higher percentage (64%) of Hispanic Texans identified this as a top priority.



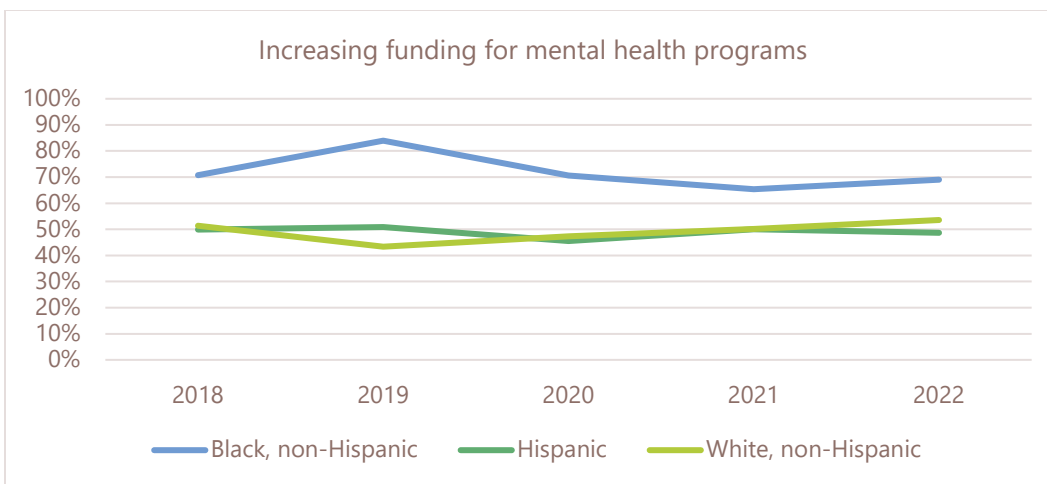
A decreasing percentage of Black, non-Hispanic Texans identified **reducing the number of women who die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth** as a top priority from 2018-2022, although support remained high at 68% in 2022. The percentage of Hispanic Texans who prioritized improving maternal mortality increased from 61% in 2018 to 70% in 2022. White, non-Hispanic Texans' prioritization of this issue held relatively steady, ranging from 46-53%.



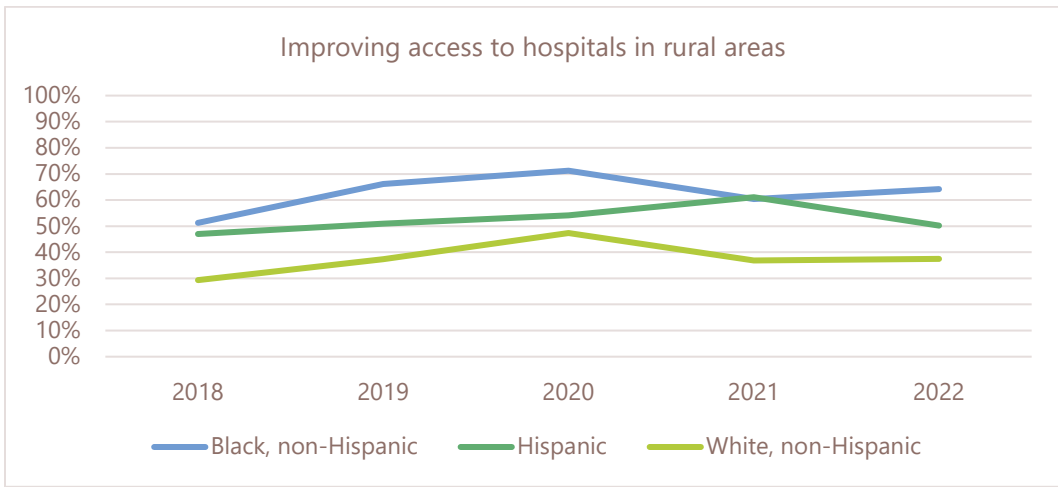
The proportion of respondents for whom **dealing with the prescription painkiller addiction epidemic** was a top priority was similar among White, non-Hispanic and Hispanic respondents across years, except in 2021 when the proportions of each group naming it a top priority were 33% and 44%, respectively. Close to or more than half (48-53%) of Black, non-Hispanic Texans named the epidemic as a top priority in 2019-2021. In 2022, their prioritization of the epidemic fell to 36%, comparable to the other groups surveyed.



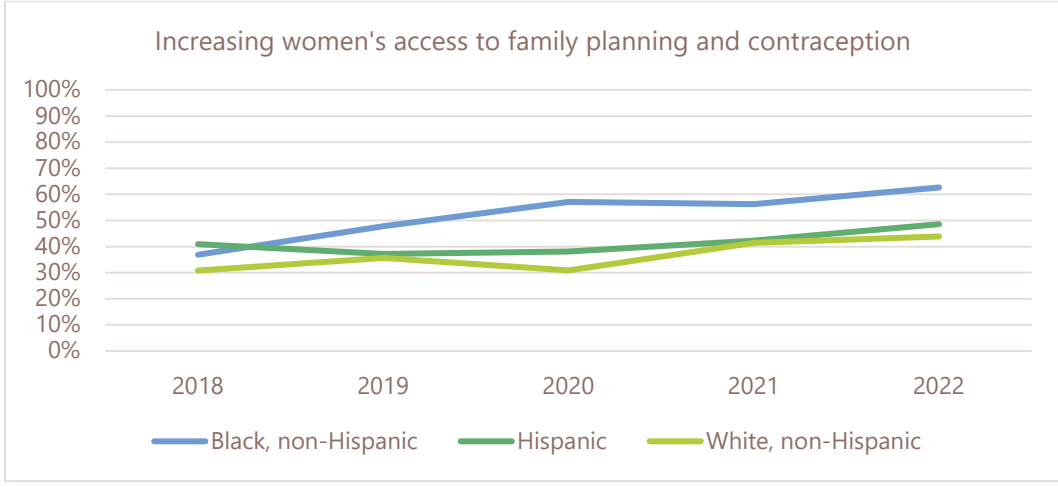
Black, non-Hispanic Texans identified **increasing funding for mental health programs** as a top priority from 2018-2022, with support ranging from 65%-84%. This was substantially higher than prioritization from other groups, which held steady at about half of Hispanic and White, non-Hispanic Texans naming it a high priority each year.



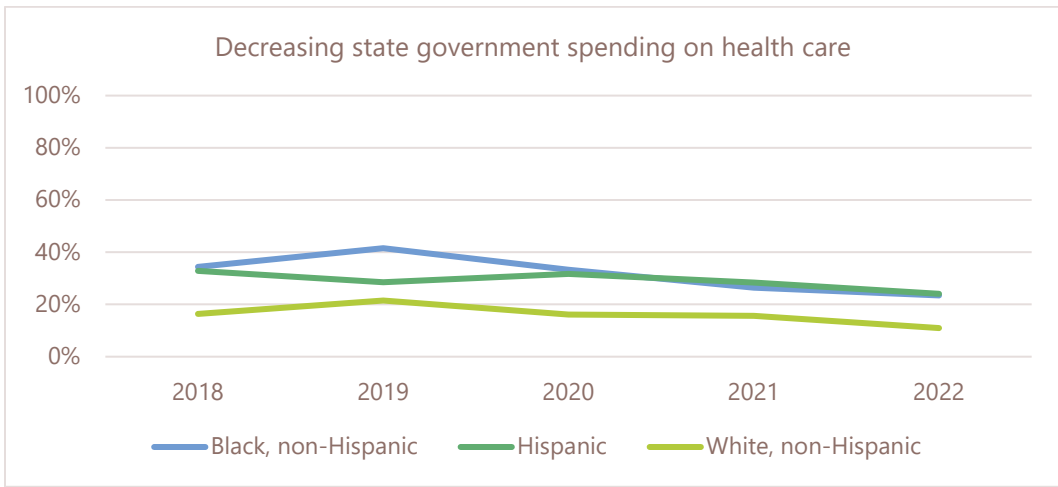
From 2018-2022, a higher percentage of Black, non-Hispanic Texans identified **improving access to hospitals in rural areas** as a top priority than other groups surveyed, except in 2021 when a slightly higher percentage of Hispanic Texans prioritized the issue. Support for improving access was consistently lowest among White, non-Hispanic respondents, with less than half calling it a top priority each year.



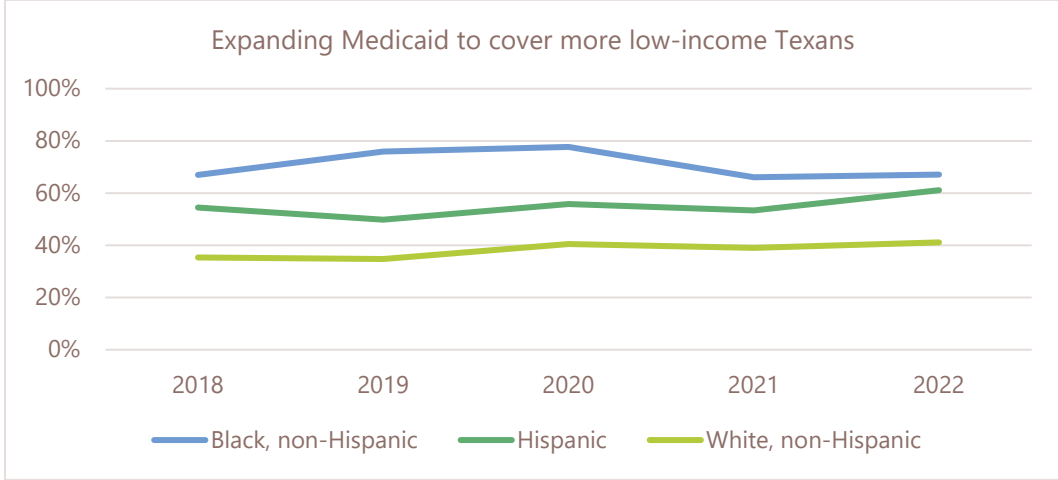
An increasing percentage of Texans across groups supported **increasing women’s access to family planning and contraception** as a top priority from 2018-2022. This increase was especially marked among Black, non-Hispanic Texans, rising from 37% to 63%.



Decreasing state government spending on health care was not named as a top priority by a majority of any group in any year. White, non-Hispanic Texans’ support for this issue was consistently lower than other groups surveyed, reaching an all-time low of 11% in 2022.

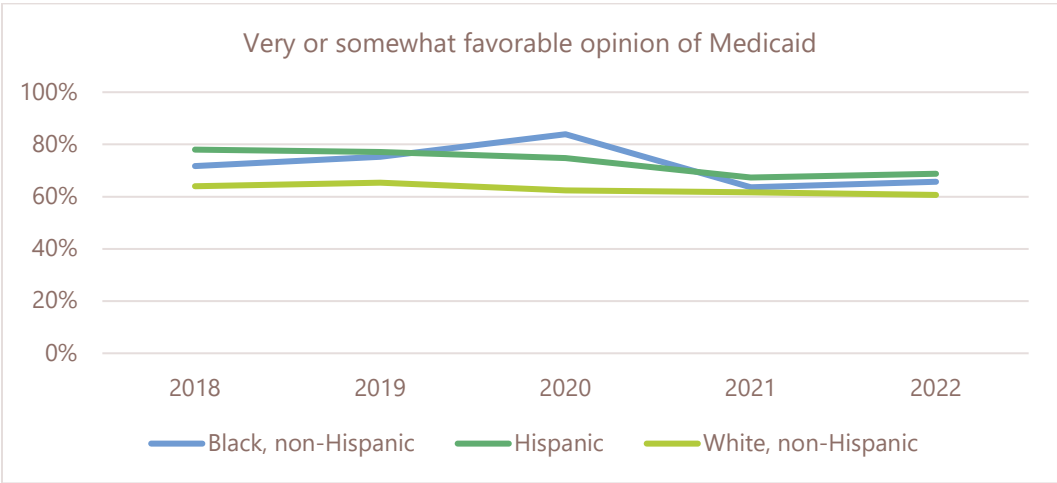


From 2018-2022, higher percentages of Black, non-Hispanic Texans identified **expanding Medicaid to cover more low-income Texans** as a top priority than other groups. Of the groups interviewed, the percentage of White, non-Hispanic Texans prioritizing this issue was lowest from year to year, with the percentage of Hispanic Texans naming Medicaid expansion a top priority consistently fell in the middle.



Medicaid Favorability and Support for Expansion

A majority of respondents in all groups had a very or somewhat favorable opinion of Medicaid in all years, however the proportion of Texans with a favorable opinion of the program did decrease from 2018 to 2022 in each group surveyed. The greatest decrease in favorability occurred among Black, non-Hispanic Texans from 2020 (84% favorable) to 2021 (64% favorable).



Over half of respondents in each group supported Medicaid expansion in Texas, and this support increased from 2018-2022. Black, non-Hispanic Texans consistently had the highest proportion of supportive respondents (ranging 84-90%), while White, non-Hispanic Texans had the lowest proportion (51-62%) and Hispanic Texans' rate of support fell in between (71-82%).

TEXANS' VIEWS ON STATE HEALTH POLICY: TRENDS BY GENDER, 2018-2022

Addressing problems in the health care system has been a longstanding priority for individuals across Texas. The state has some of the starkest disparities in health care coverage and access. Texas is one of the ten states that has not expanded Medicaid, and has not adopted other coverage changes, like the full 12-month postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage for new mothers. And preliminary data from Texas Health and Human Services suggests that infant mortality is rising, likely as a result of the state's abortion restrictions.

When asked to prioritize ten health policy topics, women were generally more likely than men to rank each issue a top priority.

Over half of both groups supported increasing health care spending in 2022; only about 10% of each group supported decreasing health care spending.

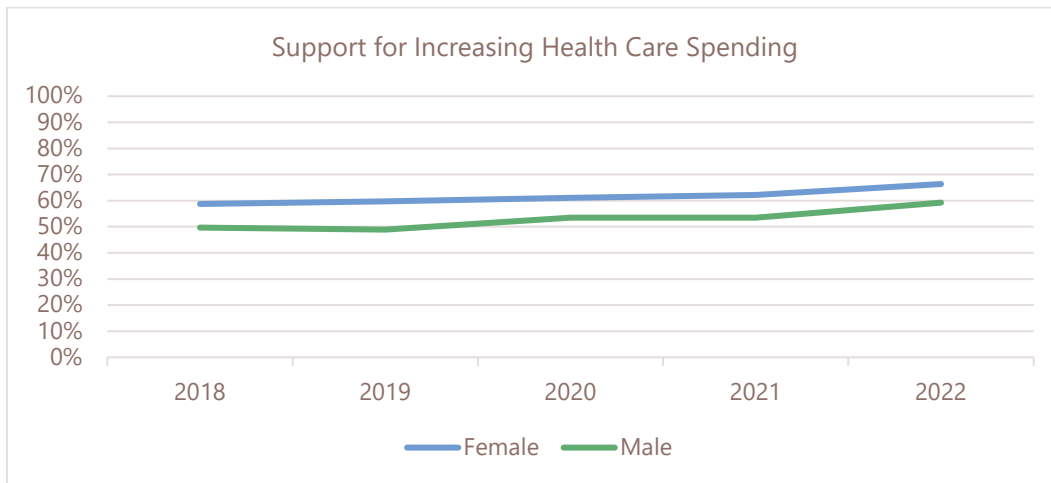
Among both women and men, lowering the amount individuals pay for health care, lowering the cost of prescription drugs and increasing access to health insurance have remained top priorities. Issues that respondents said the state should prioritize at lower rates include dealing with the prescription painkiller epidemic and improving access to hospitals in rural areas (although at least 40% of both groups say the state should prioritize both issues).

Reducing the number of women who die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth—an often-gendered topic because of its impact on women—has actually remained a priority across both groups since 2018. However, there was a jump in the share of women who said this should be a top priority for the state between 2021 and 2022, whereas the share of men remained constant during the same time period (50%). Support for increasing women's access to family planning and contraception, another gendered topic, has increased across among both women and men in the state, though the gap in support has increased (30% male Texans ranking it top priority vs 41% female Texans in 2018; 38% male Texans ranking it top priority vs 58% female Texans in 2022).

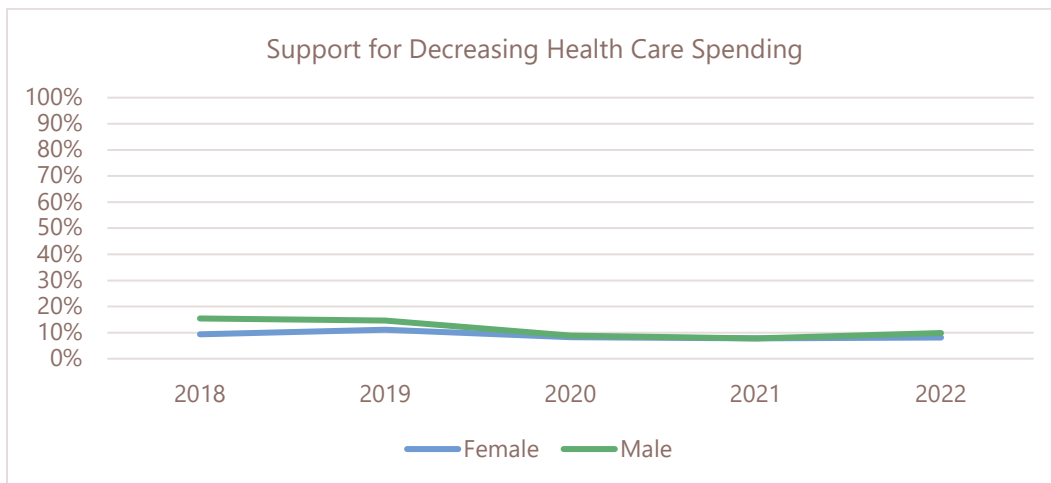
Overall Support for Increasing Health Spending

Survey Question: Thinking about priorities in the state budget, do you think the state legislature should increase or decrease spending on **health care programs** or keep it about the same?

Women have consistently expressed higher support for increasing spending on health care programs in the state over time. But about at least half of each group has supported increasing state spending on health care since 2018. This past year, both groups expressed the most support for increasing health care spending since 2019: two-thirds of women and nearly 60% of men said increasing health care spending should be a top priority for the state.



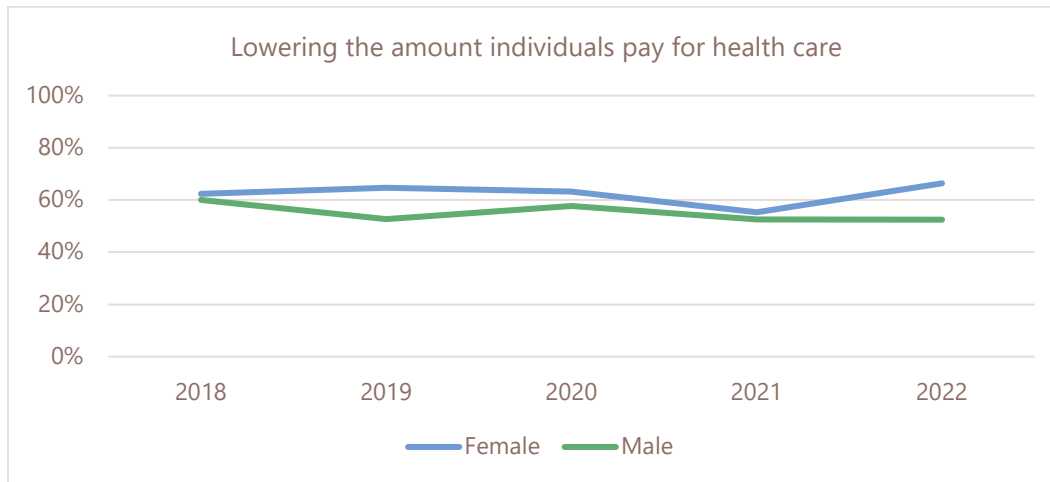
Conversely, the share of both women and men who support **decreasing** health care spending has remained quite low over time.



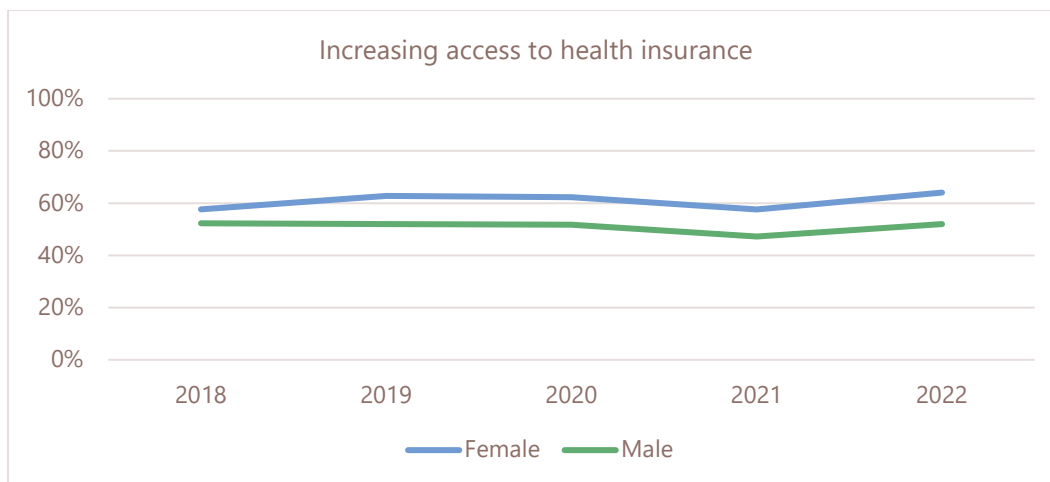
Identifying Top Priorities

Since 2018, over 50% of both women and men have said that **lowering the amount individuals pay for health care** should be a top priority for the state. Notably, in 2022, about two-thirds of women (66%)—the highest percentage yet—said the state should make this a top priority.

Survey Question: What about ____?
Should that be a top priority for the Texas legislature, important but not a top priority, not too important, or should it not be done?

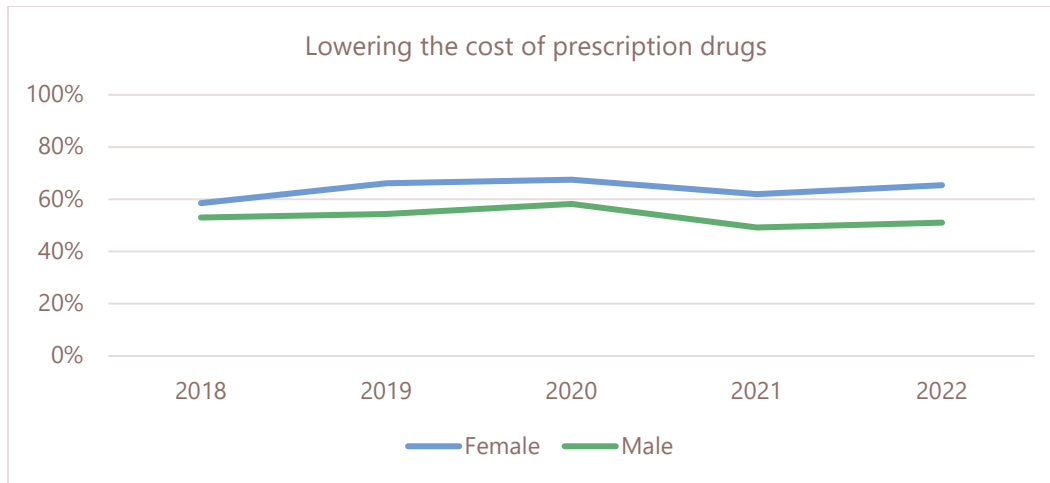


Increasing access to health insurance has also remained a top priority for Texans since 2018. There was a slight drop-in support for this in 2021 among both groups. However, support for increasing access to health insurance as a top priority went back up in 2022—64% of women and 52% of men said it should be top of mind for the state.

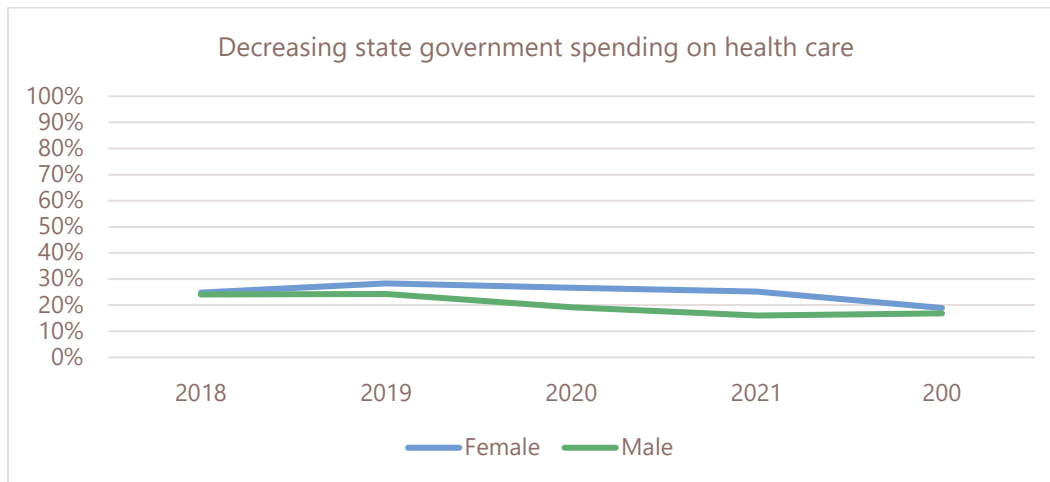


Lowering the cost of prescription drugs is a priority at the federal level—and Texans feel as though the state legislature should be doing more, too. Prioritizing the cost of prescription drugs has consistently been top of mind for Texans, with some variation over the years. Both

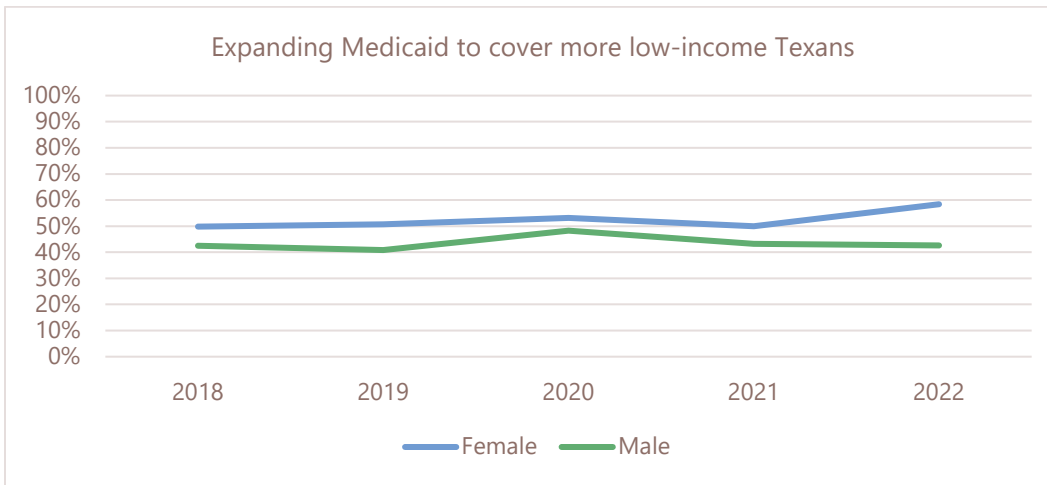
groups said they thought the legislature should prioritize lowering the cost of prescription drugs the most in 2020. Support still remains high—last year 65% of women and over half of men (51%) said it should be a top priority.



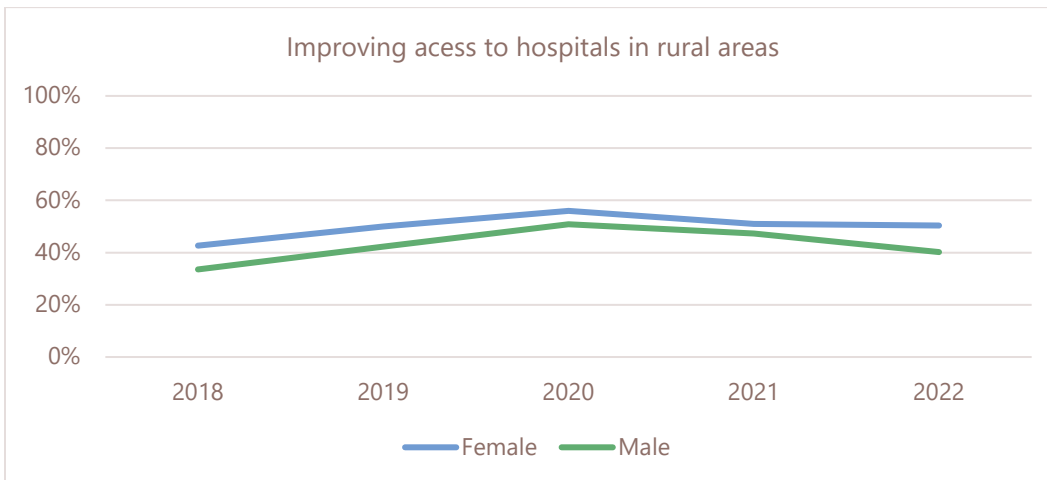
The percentage of both groups that say **decreasing state government spending on health care** should be a top priority for the state has remained low over time.



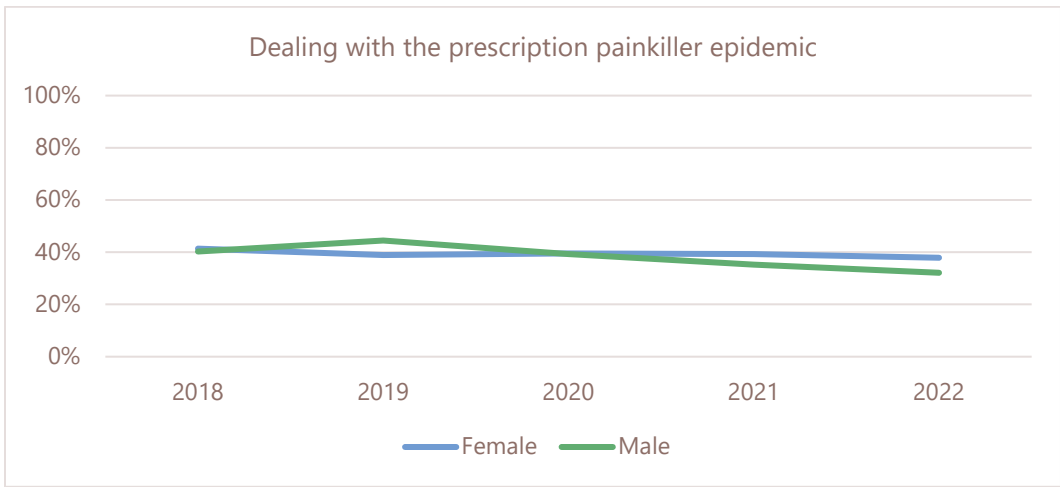
Texas is among the 10 states that have not expanded their Medicaid programs. Prioritizing **Medicaid expansion** has consistently been rated higher among women than men in the state. This was particularly true in 2022. Nearly 60% (58%) of women said expansion should be a top priority for the legislature, as compared to 43% of men in the state.



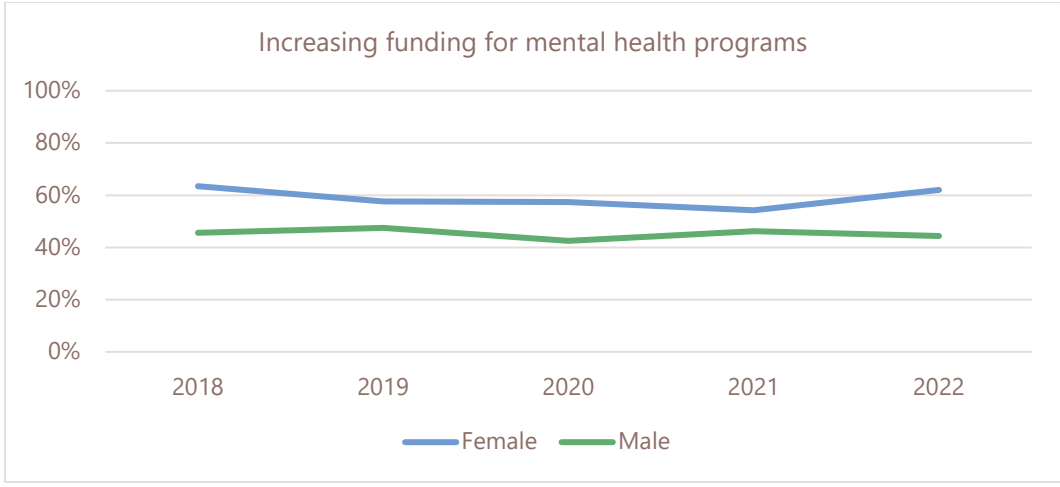
More women have consistently said that **improving access to hospitals in rural areas** should be a top priority for the state as compared to men over time. However, the share of both groups that have identified this issue as a top priority have grown over time from 2018 to 2022.



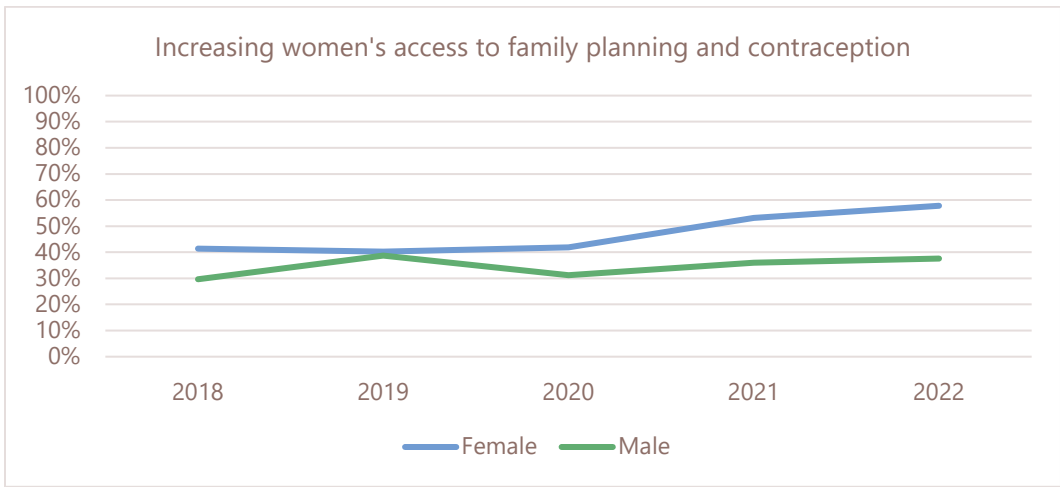
The share of both groups who said **dealing with the prescription painkiller epidemic** should be a top priority has remained similar over time. At one point (2019), the share of men reporting this should be a top priority was greater than women (45% vs 39%), but a slightly higher share of women have reported it should be a top priority since.



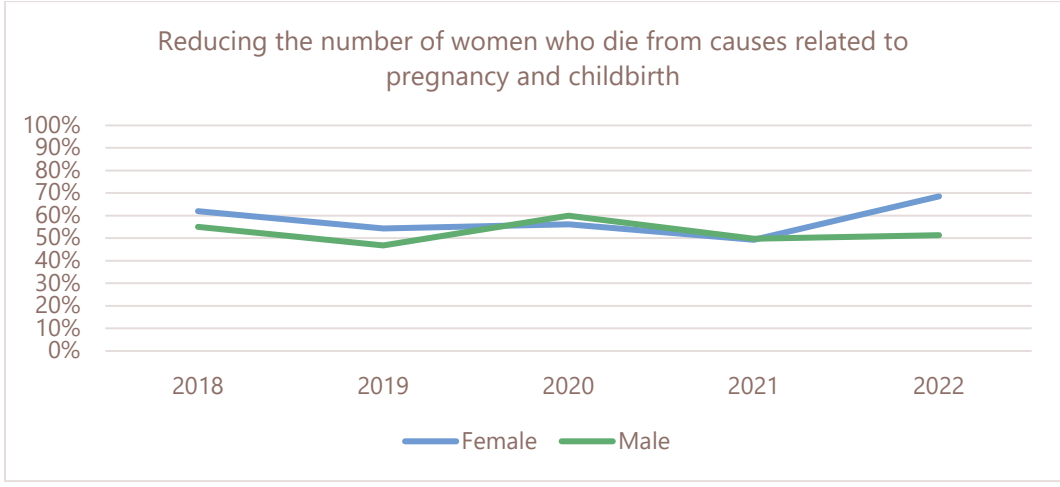
A gulf between the share of women and men who say that **increasing funding for mental health programs** should be a top priority for the state has existed since 2018. In 2022, there was a nearly 20 percentage-point difference between the two groups (62% of women and 44% of men).



The gulf between women and men who say **increasing women’s access to family planning and contraception** has also grown over time. In 2022, 58% of women and 38% of men said increasing access to these services should be a top priority; in 2018 41% of women and 30% of men said the same.

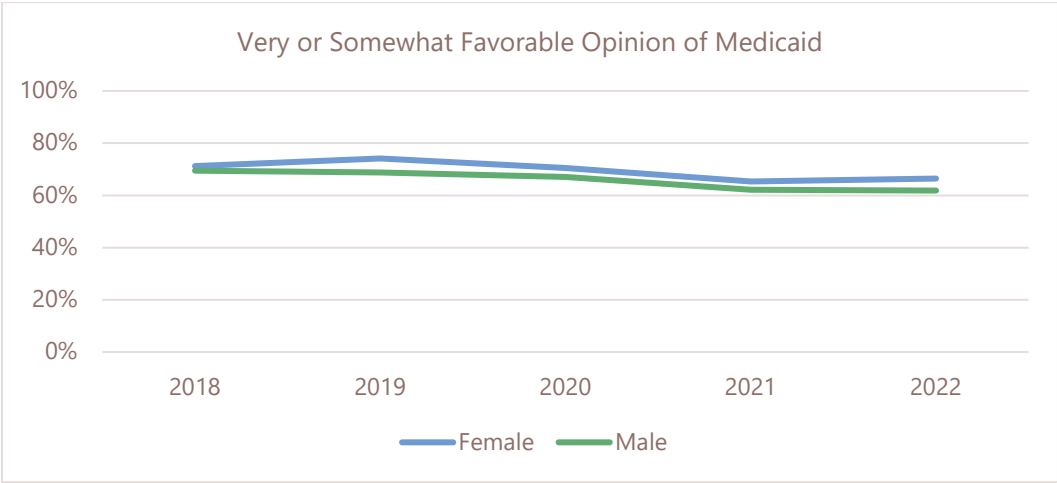


Over half of both groups say that **reducing maternal mortality** should be a top priority for the state. The increase between 2021 and 2022 in the share of women who said this should be a top priority is notable; it jumped from 49 to 69% over the one-year period.



Medicaid Favorability and Support for Expansion

Over 60 percent of both groups have had a very or somewhat **favorable opinion of Medicaid** generally since 2018. A slightly higher share of women has consistently reported a more favorable view, but the trends between the two have remained consistent over time.



General support for Medicaid expansion has remained well over 50% in both groups since 2018. According to the most recent data, three-quarters of women and nearly 70% (68%) of men support the state expanding.

