

HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE

Health insurance assistance, also referred to as *health insurance premium and cost-sharing assistance*, provides financial assistance to persons living with HIV (PLWH) with third-party health insurance coverage (such as private insurance, ACA Qualified Health Plans, COBRA, or Medicare) so they can obtain or maintain health care benefits. This includes funding for premiums, deductibles, Advanced Premium Tax Credit liability, and co-pays for both medical visits and medication.

(**Graph 1**) In the 2016 Houston HIV Care Services Needs Assessment, 59% of participants indicated a need for *health insurance assistance* in the past 12 months. 50% reported the service was easy to access, and 9% reported difficulty. 15% stated that they did not know the service was available.

(**Table 1**) When barriers to *health insurance assistance* were reported, the most common barrier type was related to health insurance coverage (31%). Health insurance-related barriers reported include being uninsured, having coverage gaps, and difficulty with ACA enrollment.

GRAPH 1-Health Insurance Assistance, 2016

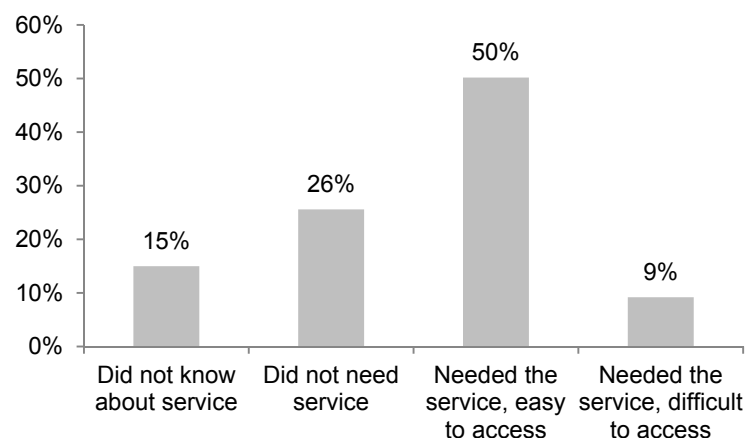


TABLE 1-Top 5 Reported Barrier Types for Health Insurance Assistance, 2016

	No.	%
1. Health Insurance Coverage (I)	15	31%
2. Education and Awareness (EA)	10	21%
3. Administrative (AD)	6	13%
4. Eligibility (EL)	6	13%
5. Financial (F)	5	10%

(**Table 2 and Table 3**) Need and access to services can be analyzed for needs assessment participants according to demographic and other characteristics, revealing the presence of any potential disparities in access to services. For *health insurance assistance* this analysis shows the following:

- More males than females found the service accessible.
- More other/multiracial PLWH found the service accessible than other race/ethnicities.
- More PLWH age 50+ found the service accessible than other age groups.
- In addition, more recently released and rural PLWH found the service difficult to access when compared to all participants.

TABLE 2-Health Insurance Assistance, by Demographic Categories, 2016

Experience with the Service	Sex		Race/ethnicity				Age		
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-49	50+
Did not know about service	14%	19%	8%	17%	16%	20%	35%	18%	8%
Did not need service	25%	27%	26%	27%	25%	0%	30%	23%	28%
Needed, easy to access	52%	42%	54%	46%	53%	67%	30%	50%	54%
Needed, difficult to access	8%	12%	11%	10%	6%	13%	4%	9%	9%

TABLE 3-Health Insurance Assistance, by Selected Special Populations, 2016

Experience with the Service	Unstably Housed ^a	MSM ^b	Out of Care ^c	Recently Released ^d	Rural ^e	Transgender ^f
Did not know about service	21%	12%	0%	16%	15%	5%
Did not need service	27%	25%	0%	24%	24%	27%
Needed, easy to access	42%	56%	100%	42%	47%	64%
Needed, difficult to access	9%	7%	0%	18%	15%	5%

^aPersons reporting housing instability ^bMen who have sex with men ^cPersons with no evidence of HIV care for 12 mo.

^dPersons released from incarceration in the past 12 mo. ^eNon-Houston/Harris County residents ^fPersons with discordant sex assigned at birth and current gender