

Attitudes and Perceptions of Healthcare in the 18- to 24-year-old Demographic

Grace Corley and Mackenzie Elliott - Missouri School of Journalism

Introduction

The rising awareness of mental health is the topic of many headlines. We were interested in understanding how the youth and young adult (YAYA) market of 18- to 24-year-olds perceives topics such as mental health, health institutions, and health care in general. Through this research, we will show that these individuals value health care, but are hesitant to seek it out themselves.

Method

A 20-minute survey was distributed each academic year from 2016-2020 through a Qualtrics survey to a national, 18- to 24-year-old respondent panel to which 700+ responses were collected each year and analyzed. The sample was weighted to match the current U.S. Census Bureau data for age, race and gender. The findings were then analyzed alongside secondary research in the form of industry and trade reports to gain a better understanding of beliefs, attitudes and behavioral tendencies of this demographic.

Research Questions

1 What are YAYA individual's perceptions of health care and health insurance?

How do YAYA consumers prioritize mental health in comparison to physical health?

3 What healthcare practices do YAYA individuals want in the workplace?

healthcare

I have avoided going to the doctor because.....

- It's too expensive (25%)
- I would rather wait and see if I get better (22%)
- I'm healthy (21%)
- I'm too busy (14%)
- A lack of transportation (9%)
- I don't trust doctors (7%)
- Other (1.86%) 2%

Which of the following best describes your situation related to health insurance?

- I am covered by my parents/guardians plan (53%)
- I purchase my own, not through employer/school (15%)
- I am covered through my employer/school (13%)
- I don't have any (19%)

For the YAYA demographic, going to the doctor is not always the first priority. Visiting the doctor is too expensive for a quarter of this age group, and more than 1 in 5 say they would rather wait and see if they will get better. Even though they say cost is an issue, the majority are covered by their parent's or guardian's plan. For about 20% of this demographic, they do not have health care at all.

mental health

The YAYA demographic especially prioritizes mental health. This is not a new trend, either. In fact, an overwhelming 97% of this age group believes it is as important to take care of mental health as it is physical health. For 2020 YAYA individuals, 43% say that mental health is the most damaging issue facing people their age and 81% believe that seeing a therapist for mental health is the same as seeing a doctor for physical health.

What is the most damaging issue facing people your age?

- Mental Health (43%)
- Electronic Cigarettes (16%)
- Opioids (15%)

81%

strongly agree that seeing a therapist for mental health is the same as seeing a doctor for physical health.

workplace

45%

strongly agree that employers should recognize mental health as a valid reason to use a sick day.

84%

agree that employers should offer paid days off for mental health in addition to sick days.

The YAYA demographic expects this topic to be addressed in the workplace. In fact, almost half of this age group strongly agrees that mental health should be a valid reason to use a sick day. Almost 40% strongly agree that employers should offer paid days off for mental health in addition to sick days. When it comes to making choices about what are the primary reasons you would choose one job over another, benefits rank low at a mere 8%. YAYA individuals say they want the options but they do not prioritize it.

Conclusion

Our research indicates that healthcare is not a straight-forward topic for YAYA individuals. They either have health insurance through another means, or they most likely don't have it at all. This demographic values mental health and expects their employers to value it as well. And while they prioritize mental health initiatives in the workplace, they do not visit a doctor as often as they should because of the expense, time or lack of transportation. Overall, healthcare companies and employers will need to realize where health insurance currently falls short for YAYA individuals and start to work in aspects that these individuals want, such as mental health resources.

Source

MOJO Ad. (2019) 2020 State of the YAYA Quantitative Research Report. [Data file]. Unpublished raw data.

MOJO Ad. (2016) 2017 State of the YAYA Quantitative Research Report. [Data file]. Unpublished raw data.