



New Study Finds More Than Half of U.S. Pet Parents Skip or Decline Needed Veterinary Care

PetSmart Charities-Gallup State of Pet Care Study finds 71% of pet parents who skipped or declined care report financial considerations as the reason

WASHINGTON, D.C. — April 16, 2025 — Over half (52%) of U.S. pet parents have either skipped or declined necessary veterinary care for their pets, according to a new study that explored pet parents' perspective on care. Launched today, the [*PetSmart Charities-Gallup State of Pet Care Study: Pet Parents' Assessment of American Veterinary Care*](#) found that among pet parents who have declined care, seven in 10 cite not being able to afford it, or that the recommended care was not worth the cost.

Conducted by PetSmart Charities and Gallup, this first-of-its kind research aimed to quantify the needs of pet parents. The study will offer a collective voice and serve as a baseline to monitor change. This research also kicks off a series of studies, which will include the voice of veterinarians early next year. Key highlights from this initial study include:

Veterinary Care Costs Are a Concern for Pet Parents Across Income Levels

Citing financial barriers as a reason to forgo or decline veterinary care affects pet parents across many income levels, though the nature of the concern varies. Those in households earning under \$60,000 are most likely to avoid care due to affordability, while higher earners are more likely to decline services they do not believe justify the cost. However, even among pet parents making \$90,000 or more, a third have skipped veterinary care because they could not afford it.

Pet Parents Say Skipping Veterinary Care Can Have Serious Health Consequences for Pets

The study also found that 14% of pet parents who skipped care say their pet's condition worsened or their pet died as a result. Additionally, nearly one in three pet parents (30%) report knowing a friend or family member who lost a pet because they could not afford necessary care.

"At PetSmart Charities, we believe that every family should be able to benefit from the love of pets — and that all pets should have access to adequate veterinary care," said Aimee Gilbreath, president of PetSmart Charities. "This study reinforces what we're seeing across the industry, that the rising cost of veterinary care is forcing loving pet parents to make devastating choices between financial stability and the wellbeing of their pets. This is a pet healthcare crisis that requires urgent attention."

Care Alternatives Are Rare but Needed

Seventy-three percent of those who declined care due to cost say their veterinarian did not offer a more affordable treatment option. Payment plans, which could ease financial burdens, are also underutilized — with less than one in four pet parents (23%) recalling ever being offered one as an option.

About four in 10 pet parents who have ever taken their pet to the veterinarian say, if the additional care options were available to them, they would turn to community clinics (38%), home visits from a veterinarian (38%), or telemedicine (37%) to help receive care for their pets.

“The data show that many pet parents are not being presented with alternative care options that could make veterinary services more accessible, despite interest in such options,” said Zach Hrynowski, a senior researcher at Gallup. “Our analysis of the data points to a clear opportunity for the veterinary industry to expand affordable, flexible solutions that meet pet parents’ needs.”

Addressing the Challenges

The scope of the problem is vast and will require collaboration from multiple stakeholders. PetSmart Charities has taken the lead by committing more than [\\$100 million](#) to improve access to veterinary care by funding solutions, including:

- providing grant funding to help expand affordable veterinary care clinics that will serve more pets and their people
- supporting research to help expand the availability of financially friendly payment options
- examining single service models that may help increase efficiencies and lower costs for pet parents
- increasing available data and research to shed light on challenges facing pet parents and veterinarians

“We estimate the cost to ensure adequate care for all pets currently going without it is over \$20 billion annually using traditional care delivery models,” added Gilbreath. “Systematic solutions to this crisis go well beyond what one organization can provide — we need a united front from veterinary industry leaders, schools, practices and nonprofit animal welfare leaders to produce sustainable change.”

For more information on how PetSmart Charities is working to expand access to veterinary care nationwide or to help support initiatives for pets and their families, visit PetSmartCharities.org.

Methodology

Results for the PetSmart Charities-Gallup State of Pet Care Study: Pet Parents' Assessment of American Veterinary Care are based on a combined web- and mail-based survey conducted with 2,498 dog and cat parents in the United States. Gallup surveyed 2,307 U.S. adults who indicated they currently had at least one dog or cat via a web-based survey Nov. 13-20, 2024. Gallup also surveyed an additional 191 dog and cat parents via a mail-based survey Dec. 2, 2024-Jan. 9, 2025, to reach pet parents who may not have access to the internet.

Gallup weighted the obtained sample to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region for the population of U.S. dog and cat parents. The margin of sampling error is ± 2.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

About PetSmart Charities

PetSmart Charities, the leading funder of animal welfare, is committed to making the world a better place for pets and all who love them. Through its in-store adoption program in all PetSmart stores, PetSmart Charities has helped more than 11 million pets across the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada connect with loving homes. PetSmart Charities also provides grant funding to support organizations that advocate and care for the well-being of all pets and their families. PetSmart Charities' grants and efforts connect pets with loving homes through adoption, improve access to affordable veterinary care and support families in times of crisis with access to food, shelter and disaster relief. Each year, millions of generous supporters help pets in need by donating to PetSmart Charities directly at PetSmartCharities.org, while shopping at PetSmart.com, and by using the PIN pads at checkout registers inside PetSmart stores. In turn, PetSmart Charities efficiently uses more than 90 cents of every dollar donated to fulfill its role as the leading funder of animal welfare in North America, granting more than \$500 million since its inception in 1994. PetSmart Charities is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has received the Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator for the past 18 years in a row — placing it among the top one percent of rated charities. To learn more, visit www.PetSmartCharities.org.

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 85 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.