

Research Brief: Healthcare Use and Communication Preferences of Bronx Patients

OBJECTIVE:

From October – November 2017, BPHC conducted research on Bronx patients' communication preferences in the context of how they use healthcare. The goal was to gain insight on how our PPS member organizations can effectively communicate with patients to drive healthcare engagement and deliver healthcare messaging to the Bronx community. The research sought to understand how community members seek care and healthcare information, preferred ways of communicating with providers, communication channels they use, and most effective ways to learn about local health events and programs.

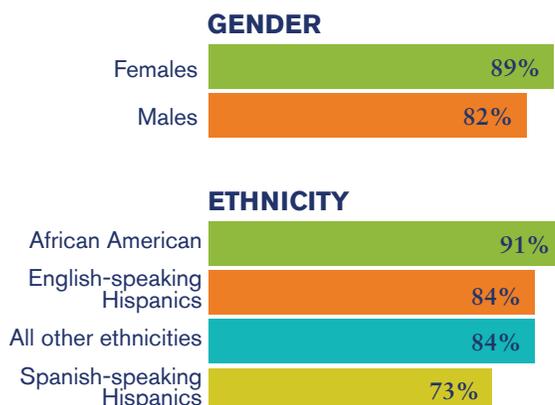
METHODOLOGY:

BPHC led quantitative and qualitative research, including one-on-one "intercept" interviews with community members and focus group discussions with Bronx patients who live with a chronic illness or behavioral health condition. Research was conducted in English and Spanish through Zebra Strategies, a New York-based market research firm. The margin of error was +/- 4%. Visit our website at Bronxphc.org for the full methodology.

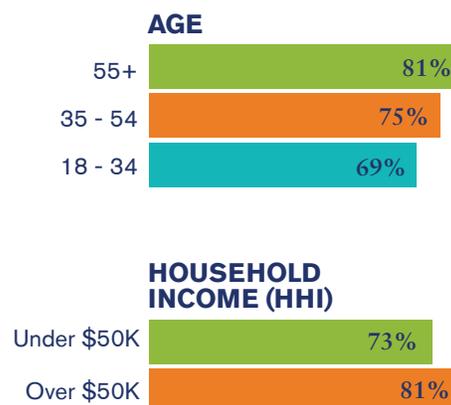
Seeking and Using Healthcare Services

Likelihood of having a Primary Care Provider and going for regular check-ups is high but varies by gender, ethnicity and age.

86% of respondents said they have a **doctor** who regularly provides care to them or their family. Responses were consistent across age groups with variances among gender and ethnicity.



74% of survey respondents said they seek **healthcare** services most often for a regular check-up. Responses were consistent across gender and ethnicity with variances among age and household income.



Reasons for choosing a PCP varies by age

Focus Group Feedback

AGE 35+

- Convenience and proximity
- Patient recommendations

AGE 18-34

- Family doctor/parent or grandparent recommendation
- Assigned by insurance

Barriers to obtaining healthcare: making appointments, language

Making Appointments: Both English and Spanish-speaking focus group participants cited long waits on hold (up to 20-minutes) and scheduling appointments far in advance, as much as 1 – 2 months.

Spanish speakers acknowledged additional challenges:

Language: Even when a patient is familiar with English, medical terminology can be hard to understand. The personal experience of the condition can be difficult to express in English.

Mixed experiences with translation services:

“Even though we all speak Spanish ... the interpreter shouldn't use idioms that are just from one country.”
“[Translators] don't always say what the doctor says.”

Spanish speakers: desire for more personal relationship with doctors

In focus groups, Spanish speakers voiced a strong desire for a more personal relationship with their doctor. In their countries, some noted they have their doctors' personal cell phone numbers to call with a medical concern.

Urgent care: little awareness overall, especially in younger groups

In focus groups, less than 1/3 knew of Urgent Care as an option for a medical concern.

Those who have used Urgent Care were very positive about it. Awareness of Urgent Care centers and their locations was higher among English speakers and increased with age.

Participants were very receptive to Urgent Care once they understood their function.

Those who were unsure cited reasons such as:

- Lack of understanding about what Urgent Care centers do
- Believe the ER is better
- Concerns over cost
- Uncertainty regarding how Urgent Care is paid for; whether it is covered by insurance

Doctor, online, and YouTube are the go-to for specific health concerns

PCP: Nearly all focus group participants trusted their PCP first for health information but also supplement with the following:

WebMD, LiveStrong, and the Mayo Clinic:

Commonly used by all, especially middle-aged and older participants.

Wikipedia: Popular among younger participants.

YouTube: Popular among all age groups to learn about a possible procedure or surgery.

Friends and family: Younger participants reported they heavily trust their parents and grandparents for healthcare information and provider referrals.

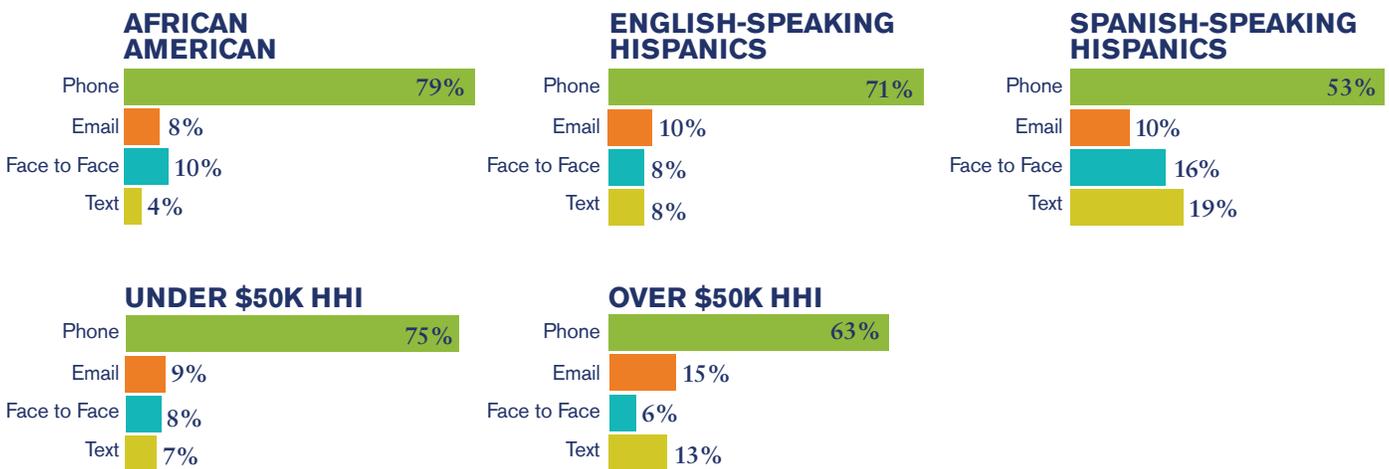


Communicating and Staying Informed about Health

Phone calls are the preferred method for communicating about scheduling and follow-up appointments

Respondents could choose all communication channels that apply.

73% of survey respondents said they prefer their doctors' office to communicate by phone for scheduling appointments. This was the preference across age, gender, ethnicity, income and household size.



Interest in interactive digital communications

In focus group discussions about additional communication options with their doctor, Spanish speakers were positive about communicating with their doctor via Skype or FaceTime, finding it more personal.

Spanish and English-speaking participants found the idea of a phone app/portal, where they could share or receive information about their medical condition to be very appealing. Ideal features include: medical records; assessment of symptoms; ability to contact doctor, appointment reminders, upload pictures/video or allow live video communication with PCP.

Smart phones are the most common way of accessing the Internet

98% of all survey respondents have access to the Internet.

88% access the Internet primarily through their smart phones.

5% of the Spanish-speaking respondents do not have Internet access.

TV and social media are most popular news sources:

Focus Group Feedback

TV and Social Media – TV is the primary news source for participants although many noted using a combination of TV and social media, especially younger groups (18-34). To stay informed about local news, Bronx 12 was the most popular channel among all Focus Group participants, including Spanish speakers. There was no preferred channel for network news.

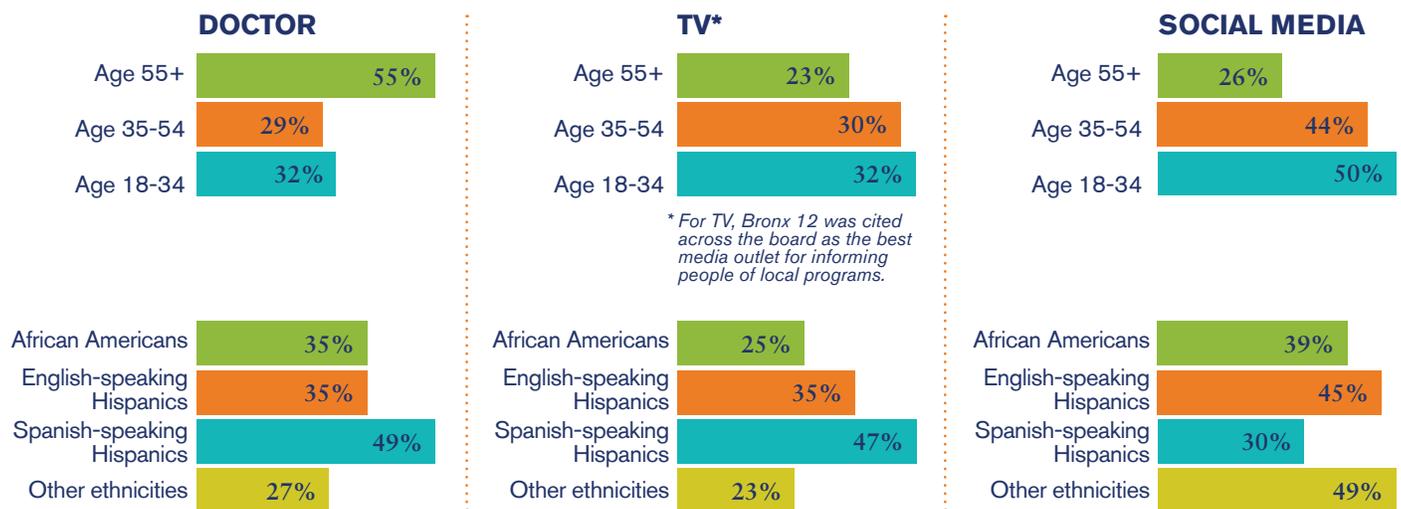
Radio – Radio is less widely used for news, particularly among younger participants, most of whom reported they do not listen to the radio. Spanish-speaking participants listen to the radio more often. Stations include La Mega, WADO, and 96.3.

Newspapers – Most focus group participants stated that they do not regularly read daily or community newspapers. Some read the free papers available in the subway. For occasional reading, they mentioned: Daily News, Bronx Times, El Especialito, New York Post, and New York Times.

Social media, doctor and local TV to learn about community programs that address your health

For English-speaking respondents, Social Media (44%), Doctor (34%), and TV (30%)

were rated most as the best ways to learn about local community programs and events that address health concerns and staying healthy. Spanish-speaking respondents prefer Doctor (49%), TV (46%) and Social Media (30%).



Younger people on multiple social media platforms

Younger people (18-34) report using multiple platforms: Instagram, Snapchat,

Facebook. Many participants from all age groups used YouTube for health information, to view medical procedures or other patients sharing their experiences. Nearly all Focus Group participants reported using Facebook.

For questions, e-mail info@bronxphc.org.

Bronx Partners for Healthy Communities, 4422 Third Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457

www.bronxphc.org

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