

# Shaping the Future

## KEY ISSUES FOR VOTERS IN 2024



### HEALTH CARE

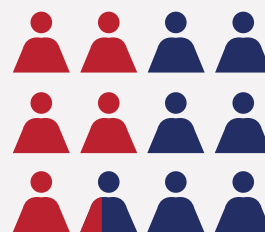
It is undeniable that Young Americans are concerned about health care. Questions over coverage, access, and quality of care are prevalent among many younger voters, whether they are in college or entering the workforce and living in a big city or a rural area. The [Spring 2024 Harvard Youth Poll](#) found that over 50% of surveyed voters (aged 18-29) prioritized several health issues, including reproductive rights, insurance, and rising threats to health.

#### I Health Priorities

Several key health priorities are concerns for Young Americans and may impact how they vote at the ballot box, especially as disparities in health care continue to emerge. As an organization dedicated to advancing health outcomes for people living with (and at risk of) HIV, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and all allies, NMAC recognizes that these health priorities are vital to the communities we serve.

- ▶ [STI rates are rising](#) — including syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia — while new cases of HIV and hepatitis disproportionately affect young Black and brown Americans. Access to care and prevention services remains a continuous challenge (World Health Organization, 2024).
- ▶ HIV remains a prevalent threat, [especially as teens and young adults are at higher risk of transmission](#) than other age groups. Although numerous breakthroughs have improved HIV prevention and treatment outcomes, the [epidemic disproportionately affects Black and Latino populations, including women](#), who do not receive prevention or treatment options at the same rates as white men. This is especially true in the South (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2024).
- ▶ Mental health is a key issue across the board, as [44% of surveyed Young Americans reported recent feelings of depression](#). While trends since 2021 have slightly improved, access to mental healthcare remains a priority (Harvard Youth Poll, 2024).
- ▶ Attitudes toward substance use [differ by generation](#) (American Addiction Center, 2024). While Gen Z Americans have seen declining rates of alcohol addiction, use of opioids, hallucinogens, and marijuana are higher among this generation, causing many to express differing opinions on how to treat substance abuse. In general, [Young Americans advocate for increases in harm reduction and treatment-forward strategies](#) to substances, rather than the stricter regulations used amongst former generations (American Psychological Association, 2024).

**44% of surveyed Young Americans reported recent feelings of depression**



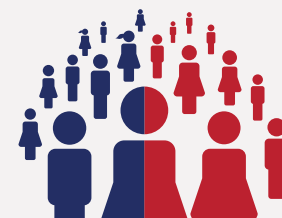
#### I Reproductive Health

Since the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision in 2022 revoked *Roe v. Wade* and federal abortion protections, access to reproductive healthcare has galvanized political organizing.

- ▶ As of April 2024, [76% of Americans under 30 were in favor of legalizing abortion](#) in all or most cases. The popularity of legalizing abortion has influenced Americans to vote for pro-choice candidates and ballot measures (Pew Research, 2024)
- ▶ Resulting state bans on abortion have disproportionately affected Black women — [60% of Black women \(aged 18-49\) now live in states with abortion bans or restrictions](#) (Hill et al., KFF 2024).

- ▶ Since the *Dobbs* Decision, [14 states have placed bans on abortion](#), and an additional 11 have placed limits on abortions between 6 and 22 weeks. Abortion policies are featured on many state ballots and are the topic of policy discussion in the presidential campaigns for both major parties (Hill et al., KFF 2024).
- ▶ About 2% of babies, or 100,000 annually, are born in the U.S. with the help of in vitro fertilization (IVF) (Hacombe, CNN 2024). Despite how vital IVF is for birthing people dealing with fertility issues, national and state legislators are seeking to restrict IVF and birth control access. In June 2024, Senate Republicans [blocked the Right to IVF Act](#), a bill to expand IVF and other assisted reproductive technology (Groves, Associated Press 2024).

**60% of Black women (aged 18-49) now live in states with abortion bans or restrictions**



## I Access to Healthcare

Younger Americans are more likely to defer seeking health care or report problems affording care than other age groups. Concerns over cost and insurance coverage remain prevalent.

- ▶ The Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act capped specific drug prices under Medicare and strengthened federal negotiations of drug costs. However, [the costs of care and surprise billing still affect young voters' concerns](#) (Palosky, KFF 2024)
- ▶ In 2024, most Young Americans [believe that insurance and health care coverage is a right](#), strengthening support for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and programs like Medicaid. The favorability of the ACA and Medicaid will affect party platforms and ballot measures, as [Republicans have previously campaigned on repealing the Affordable Care Act \(ACA\)](#) (Harvard Youth Poll, 2024).

## WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE 2024 ELECTION?

Health care will undoubtedly be on the ballot nationwide in November, from presidential campaigns to local measures. Young voters will have the opportunity to make their voices heard and their concerns prioritized.

- ▶ [At least 11 states](#) are seeking to place direct measures on abortion on the ballot. (Habeshian, Axios 2024)
- ▶ Congressional Democrats on the ballot are [expected to highlight expanding access to care for Americans](#), including expanding HIV and STI prevention and treatment amongst minority populations, while Republicans will point to rising costs associated with care and advocate for careful restrictions (Kenen, Politico 2024).
- ▶ [VP Harris has focused on expanding health coverage](#) and reproductive rights; [former President Trump aims to leave abortion decisions to states](#) while reducing costs/coverage of ACA, Medicaid, and Medicare (Firth, MedPage Today 2024).

About **NMAC**: Formerly known as the National Minority AIDS Council, NMAC is a 37-year old community organization that "leads with race" as the only sustainable way to end the HIV epidemic in the United States. We offer educational and capacity building programs, advocacy and mobilization efforts, and we host [Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit](#) and the [U.S. Conference of HIV/AIDS](#).

NMAC's **Coalition for Equality and Justice Across Movements** mobilizes against the growing vitriol against vulnerable and marginalized communities by with uniting other national movement leaders and support the collective with state-of-the-art communications and community mobilization strategies. Get Out The Vote is a Coalition initiative to register people of color to vote and be heard in the November 2024 election.