



Source of Usual Health Care for Adults Age 18 and Older: United States, 2024

Laryssa Mykyta, Ph.D., and Julie D. Weeks, Ph.D.

Key findings

Data from the 2024 National Health Interview Survey

- In 2024, 9 in 10 adults reported having a source of usual health care, with women more likely to report having a source of usual care (93.3%) than men (87.1%).
- Women were more likely to report a doctor's office or health center as their source of usual care (82.2%) compared with men (72.6%).
- The percentage of adults reporting an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual care declined with age.
- The percentage of adults with a Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual care increased with age.
- Men were more likely (2.0%) than women (1.5%) to report a hospital emergency room as their usual source of health care.

Introduction

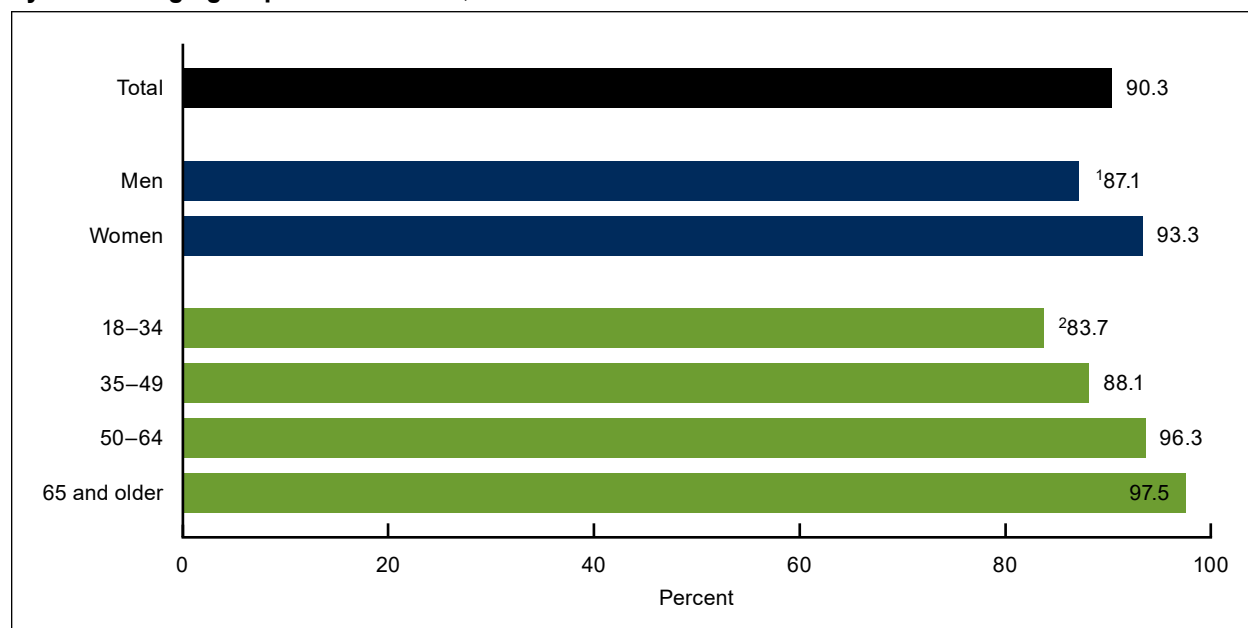
Having a regular health care provider or a place for routine medical care can provide early detection, treatment, and management of chronic disease (1). In addition, having a source of usual health care when one is sick or needs care is associated with an increased likelihood of receiving preventive screenings and services (1–3). This *Data Brief* uses 2024 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data to examine sources of usual health care among adults age 18 and older by sex and age group.



Source of usual health care

- In 2024, 90.3% of adults had a source of usual health care, meaning a usual place where they go if they are sick and need care (Figure 1, Table 1).
- Women were more likely to have a source of usual care (93.3%) than men (87.1%).
- The percentage of adults with a source of usual care increased with age, from 83.7% among adults ages 18–34 to 97.5% among those 65 and older.

Figure 1. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported having a source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024



¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).

²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

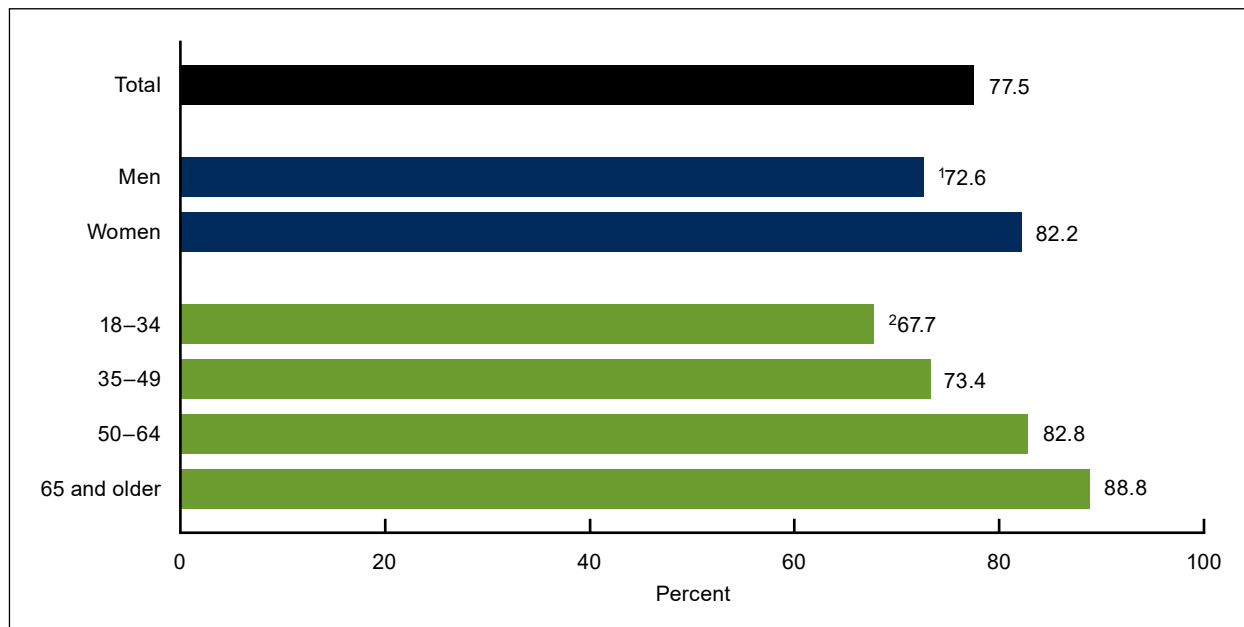
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Doctor’s office or health center

- In 2024, more than three in four adults used a doctor’s office or health center (77.5%) as their source of usual care (Figure 2, Table 2).
- Women were more likely to report a doctor’s office or health center (82.2%) as their source of usual care compared with men (72.6%).
- The percentage of adults with a doctor’s office or health center as their source of usual care increased with age, from 67.7% among adults ages 18–34 to 88.8% among those 65 and older.

Figure 2. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a doctor’s office or health center as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024



¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).

²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

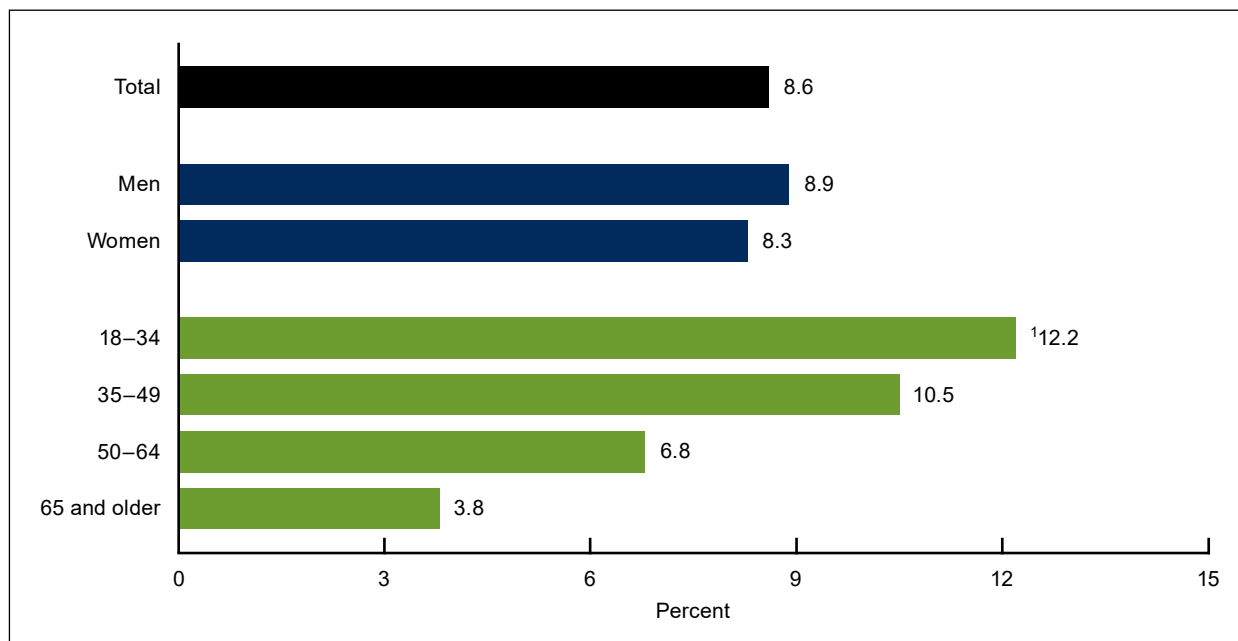
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “doctor’s office or other health center” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Urgent care center or clinic

- In 2024, 8.6% of adults reported an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual health care (Figure 3, Table 3).
- The percentages of men and women with an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual care were similar.
- The percentage of adults with an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual care decreased with age, from 12.2% of adults ages 18–34 to 3.8% of adults 65 and older.

Figure 3. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024



¹Significant decreasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

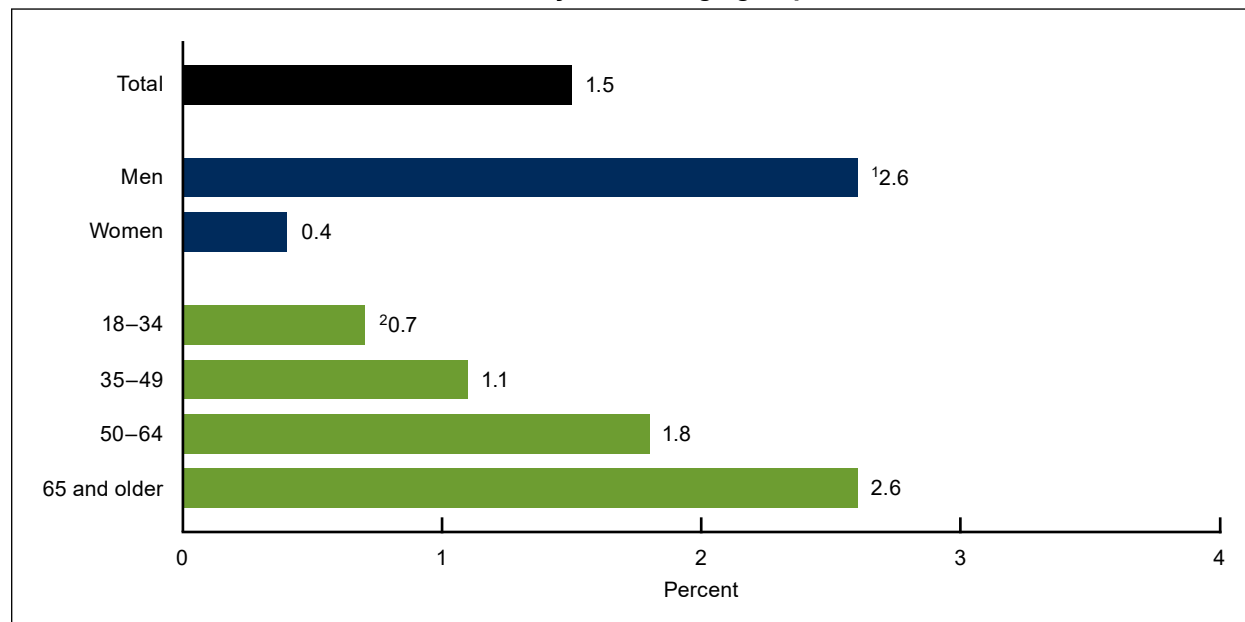
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

VA medical center or clinic

- In 2024, 1.5% of adults used a Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual health care (Figure 4, Table 4).
- Men were more likely (2.6%) than women (0.4%) to report a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual care.
- The percentage of adults with a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual care increased with age, from 0.7% of adults ages 18–34 to 2.6% of adults 65 and older.

Figure 4. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024



¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).

²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

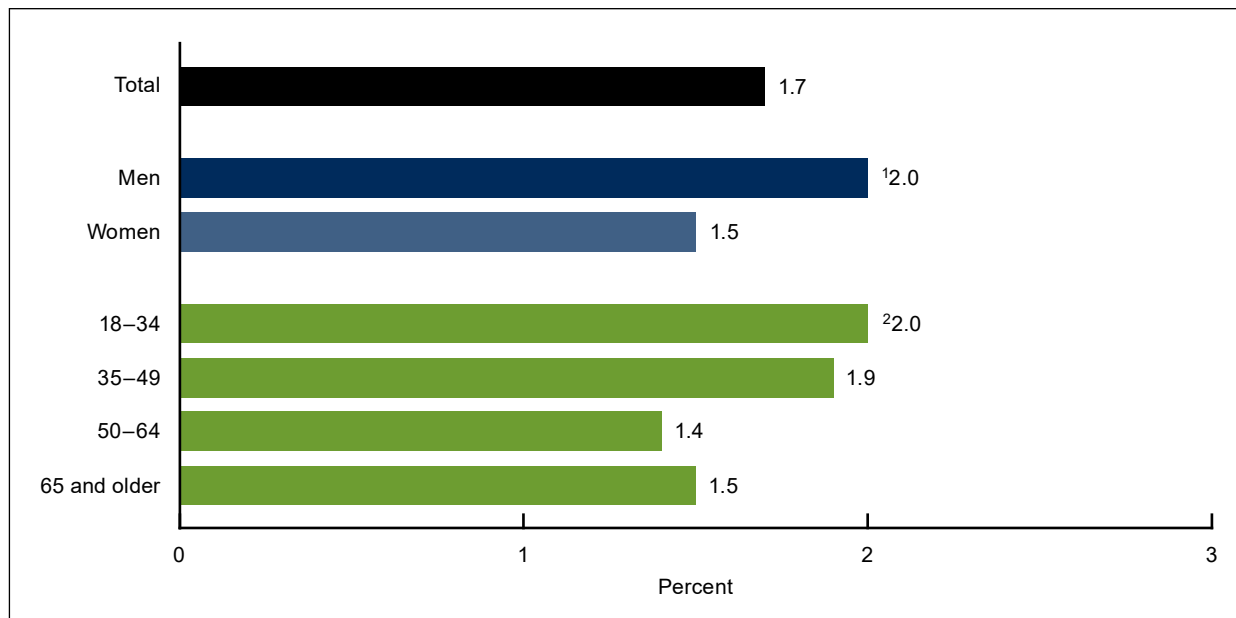
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Hospital emergency room

- In 2024, a hospital emergency room was the source of usual health care for 1.7% of adults (Figure 5, Table 5).
- Men (2.0%) were more likely than women (1.5%) to use a hospital emergency room as their source of usual care.
- Adults ages 18–34 (2.0%) and 35–49 (1.9%) were more likely to use a hospital emergency room as their source of usual care than adults 50–64 (1.4%) or 65 and older (1.5%).

Figure 5. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a hospital emergency room as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024



¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).

²Significant decreasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “hospital emergency room” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Summary

Using nationally representative data, this report examines the source of usual health care among adults age 18 and older by sex and age group. In 2024, 9 in 10 adults had a source of usual health care. Women were more likely than men both to have a source of usual care and to report a doctor’s office or health center as their source of usual care. Men were more likely than women to report a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic or a hospital emergency room as their source of usual care. The percentage of adults with a doctor’s office or health center or a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual care increased with age, while the percentage of adults with an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual care declined with age.

Definition

Source of usual care: Based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” Adults responding “yes” or “more than one place” were then asked, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some

other place?” Estimates for “some other place” are not shown but are included in total estimates.

Data source and methods

Data from the Sample Adult module of the 2024 NHIS were used for this analysis. NHIS is a nationally representative household survey of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. NHIS is conducted continuously throughout the year by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Interviews are typically initiated face-to-face in respondents' homes, with follow-ups conducted by telephone as needed (4). For more information about NHIS, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/index.html>. Point estimates and corresponding variances for this analysis were calculated using SAS-callable SUDAAN software version 11.0 (5) to account for the complex sample design of NHIS. All estimates are based on self-report and meet NCHS data presentation standards for proportions (6). Differences between percentages were evaluated using two-sided significance tests at the 0.05 level. Linear trends by age group were evaluated using orthogonal polynomials in logistic regression.

About the authors

Laryssa Mykyta and Julie D. Weeks are with the National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Analysis and Epidemiology. The authors would like to acknowledge Nazik Elgaddal, Division of Analysis and Epidemiology, for providing content review of figures and tables.

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Figure tables

Data table for Figure 1. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported having a source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024

Characteristic	Percent (95% confidence interval)	Standard error
Total	90.3 (89.8–90.8)	0.3
Sex		
Men	¹ 87.1 (86.2–87.9)	0.4
Women	93.3 (92.8–93.9)	0.3
Age group		
18–34	² 83.7 (82.5–84.9)	0.6
35–49	88.1 (87.0–89.1)	0.5
50–64	93.6 (92.9–94.3)	0.4
65 and older	97.5 (97.1–97.8)	0.2

¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).
²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).
 NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population.
 SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Data table for Figure 2. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a doctor’s office or health center as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024

Characteristic	Percent (95% confidence interval)	Standard error
Total	77.5 (76.7–78.3)	0.4
Sex		
Men	¹ 72.6 (71.5–73.7)	0.6
Women	82.2 (81.3–83.1)	0.4
Age group		
18–34	² 67.7 (66.2–69.2)	0.8
35–49	73.4 (71.9–74.7)	0.7
50–64	82.8 (81.7–83.8)	0.5
65 and older	88.8 (88.0–89.6)	0.4

¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).
²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).
 NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “doctor’s office or other health center” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.
 SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Data table for Figure 3. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024

Characteristic	Percent (95% confidence interval)	Standard error
Total	8.6 (8.1–9.1)	0.3
Sex		
Men	8.9 (8.3–9.6)	0.4
Women	8.3 (7.7–8.9)	0.3
Age group		
18–34	¹ 12.2 (11.2–13.3)	0.5
35–49	10.5 (9.6–11.5)	0.5
50–64	6.8 (6.1–7.6)	0.4
65 and older	3.8 (3.3–4.3)	0.3

¹Significant decreasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and an “urgent care center or grocery or drug store clinic” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Data table for Figure 4. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024

Characteristic	Percent (95% confidence interval)	Standard error
Total	1.5 (1.3–1.7)	0.1
Sex		
Men	¹ 2.6 (2.3–3.0)	0.2
Women	0.4 (0.3–0.6)	0.1
Age group		
18–34	² 0.7 (0.5–0.9)	0.1
35–49	1.1 (0.8–1.5)	0.2
50–64	1.8 (1.4–2.2)	0.2
65 and older	2.6 (2.3–3.0)	0.2

¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).
²Significant increasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).
NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Data table for Figure 5. Percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported a hospital emergency room as their source of usual health care, by sex and age group: United States, 2024

Characteristic	Percent (95% confidence interval)	Standard error
Total	1.7 (1.5–1.9)	0.1
Sex		
Men	¹ 2.0 (1.7–2.4)	0.2
Women	1.5 (1.2–1.7)	0.1
Age group		
18–34	² 2.0 (1.6–2.5)	0.2
35–49	1.9 (1.6–2.4)	0.2
50–64	1.4 (1.1–1.8)	0.2
65 and older	1.5 (1.2–1.8)	0.1

¹Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).

²Significant decreasing linear trend by age ($p < 0.05$).

NOTES: Data are based on either a “yes” or “more than one place” response to the survey question, “Is there a place that you usually go if you are sick and need health care?” and a “hospital emergency room” response to the survey question, “What kind of place do you go to most often—a doctor’s office or health center; an urgent care center or clinic in a drug store or grocery store; a hospital emergency room; a VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic; or some other place?” Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. VA is Veterans Affairs.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2024.

Suggested citation

Mykyta L, Weeks JD. Source of usual health care for adults age 18 and older: United States, 2024. NCHS Data Brief. 2026 Apr;(558):1–11. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc/252437>.

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ISSN 1941-4927 Print ed. | ISSN 1941-4935 Online ed.

CS363924