SCAI COVID-19 Updated Consumer Survey Shows Continued Concern of Patients, Especially among Underserved Populations

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Dear Members,

Last year at the onset of COVID-19, SCAI conducted a national survey to determine American's fears and concerns surrounding coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) when experiencing a medical emergency such as heart attack or stroke. The results showed that Americans needed to be reassured that proper precautions and protocols were in place to keep them safe from COVID-19 and make them feel comfortable to go into the hospital and visit their doctors. Therefore, we initiated the SCAI Seconds Still Count patient awareness campaign to educate people that even in this COVID-19 environment, seconds still count when it comes to their heart health.

The campaign has been tremendously successful in raising awareness of cardiovascular health and wellness, including prevention, management, and treatment of cardiovascular disease, and ensuring patients receive care they need for ongoing health issues and acute medical emergencies.

This past December, SCAI conducted another national survey which revealed that 40% of Americans still do not feel safe going to the doctor's office while coronavirus (COVID-19) is still a risk. As the United States reached the one-year mark of the ongoing pandemic, these results underscore concerns that many Americans are not maintaining their overall health through routine care due to fears of COVID-19.

This new data comes at an important time when there has been a more than 20% decrease in primary care visits since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (JAMA), and a nearly 40 percent drop in patients being treated for a life-threatening cardiac events such as STEMs. In fact, SCAI's survey found more than 30% of Americans have not had a routine check-up with their doctor since the pandemic began and more than half would be uncomfortable scheduling a medical procedure while COVID-19 is still a risk. More than 45% of African American and Latino adult respondents would be uncomfortable going to the doctor's office, compared to only 25% of the general population.

Chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, stroke, and diabetes are known to disproportionately impact minority populations. When it comes to heart health, African American adults ages 18–49 are two times as likely to die from heart disease than whites (CDC). Yet, African American and Latino adults feel less safe going to the doctor's office during the ongoing pandemic compared to the general population. Only 25% of African American adults and 29% of Latinx respondents currently feel comfortable scheduling a medical procedure, compared to 48% of the general population.

Overview and Survey Methodology:

- **General Population:** This survey included 1,005 responses from a nationally representative sample over age 18. The confidence level for the survey is 95% with a margin of error of ±3.09.
- **Latino Population:** This survey included 1,023 responses from a sample of Latino respondents using census data for age and sex balancing. All respondents are over age 18. The confidence level for the survey is 95% with a margin of error of ±3.06.
- **Black/African American Population:** This survey included 1,041 responses from a sample of Black/African American respondents using census data for age and sex balancing. All respondents are over age 18. The confidence level for the survey is 95% with a margin of error of ±3.04.

Key Takeaways:

- Nearly 40% of Americans do not feel safe going to a doctor’s office during COVID-19
• More than 30% of Americans have not had a routine check-up with their doctor since the COVID-19 pandemic began
• More than half (51%) of people do not feel comfortable scheduling a medical procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic
• Only 25% of Black/African Americans and 29% of Latinos would be comfortable scheduling a medical procedure
• Only 33% of Black and African Americans and 34% of Latino respondents would be comfortable going to the hospital for an emergency while COVID-19 is still a risk, compared to 58% of the general population
• More people are afraid of contracting COVID-19 (58%) than having a heart attack or stroke (42%)

COVID-19 has changed the healthcare landscape as we know it, with consequences that will reverberate potentially for years to come. One challenge we can help prevent today is the impact of chronic disease among individuals who have fallen out of care due to fear of the virus. We know that cardiac care can’t wait for a time without COVID-19. We’ve seen an increase in medical emergencies like heart attacks and stroke, and the impact of cardiac patients delaying treatment for progressive heart conditions like aortic stenosis and atrial fibrillation, which can result in more complications and time spent in the hospital. For the millions of patients with heart disease, we hope the Seconds Still Campaign will encourage patients to not let fear stand in the way of better outcomes and quality of life.

In the coming months, the campaign will continue to amplify its messaging of staying in care, especially when it comes to managing their heart health, by reaching out to at-risk individuals and families while they watch local news, connect on social media and stream entertainment. We will also be partnering with patient support organizations similar to our collaboration with Mended Hearts, and connecting with local faith leaders to spread awareness across the nation. Our widely used hospital toolkit will be updated in the coming weeks with updated infographics, social media content, fact sheets, and other turnkey communications that can be shared across your systems. I hope you will join me in spreading awareness about the importance of getting our patients back in care to help save lives during this critical time.

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