



## Healthcare Consumer Confidence Rises, According to Thomson Reuters Sentiment Index

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Americans' confidence in their ability to access and pay for healthcare rose in August, reversing a more pessimistic outlook that had prevailed all year, according to a consumer sentiment index produced by Thomson Reuters.

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In August, fewer American healthcare consumers reported that they had postponed or cancelled treatment in the previous three months and fewer expected to have difficulty paying for healthcare services in the next three months. Overall, the Thomson Reuters *Consumer Healthcare Sentiment Index* rose four points from 95 in July to 99 in August, a statistically significant increase.

"This notable increase in confidence may signal growing optimism heading into the final quarter of the year," said Gary Pickens, chief research officer at the Thomson Reuters Center for Healthcare Analytics. "However, we will need to see similar results over the next several months before we can confirm a meaningful rise in consumer healthcare sentiment."

The index, which is based on the Thomson Reuters PULSE(TM) Healthcare Survey, has two parts:

- A retrospective component gauges respondents' experiences during the past three months. It tracks whether they postponed, delayed or cancelled healthcare services and whether they had difficulty paying for medical care or health insurance. In August, retrospective consumer sentiment climbed to 99 on the index scale, up three points from 96 in July.
- A prospective component gauges respondents' expectations for the next three months. In August, prospective consumer sentiment climbed to 99 on the index scale, up five points from 94 in July.

"Sentiment increased significantly when people were asked what they had experienced in the past -- and it increased even faster when they were asked about their expectations for the future," Pickens said. "That may mean this rosier view will have staying power. Time will tell".

The Thomson Reuters *Consumer Healthcare Sentiment Index* is updated monthly. A full report on the August results is available here: [http://healthcarescience.thomsonreuters.com/indexes/assets/Aug2010Index\\_CHSI.pdf](http://healthcarescience.thomsonreuters.com/indexes/assets/Aug2010Index_CHSI.pdf)

The Thomson Reuters PULSE Healthcare Survey collects information about healthcare behaviors, attitudes and utilization from more than 100,000 U.S. households annually. It is representative of all U.S. adults and households. The *Consumer Healthcare Sentiment Index* is based on responses from a survey subset of 3,000 respondents each month. Its baseline measurement of 100 was set in December 2009.

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