



Whole-Person Care Integrates Mental, Physical, and Social Health

Whole-person care at a glance

Whole-person care may be a relatively new term, but it describes an old concept—caring for the individual as a whole rather than focusing solely on separate diagnoses or medical issues. In other words, it's a holistic approach to healthcare. Implementing whole-person care requires coordination among healthcare providers and a patient-centered philosophy. This approach recognizes that cultural differences, behavioral health, and social determinants of health all [play a role in patient outcomes](#).

Social determinants of health—like economic stability and education—can have a bigger impact on health than genetic factors or access to healthcare.

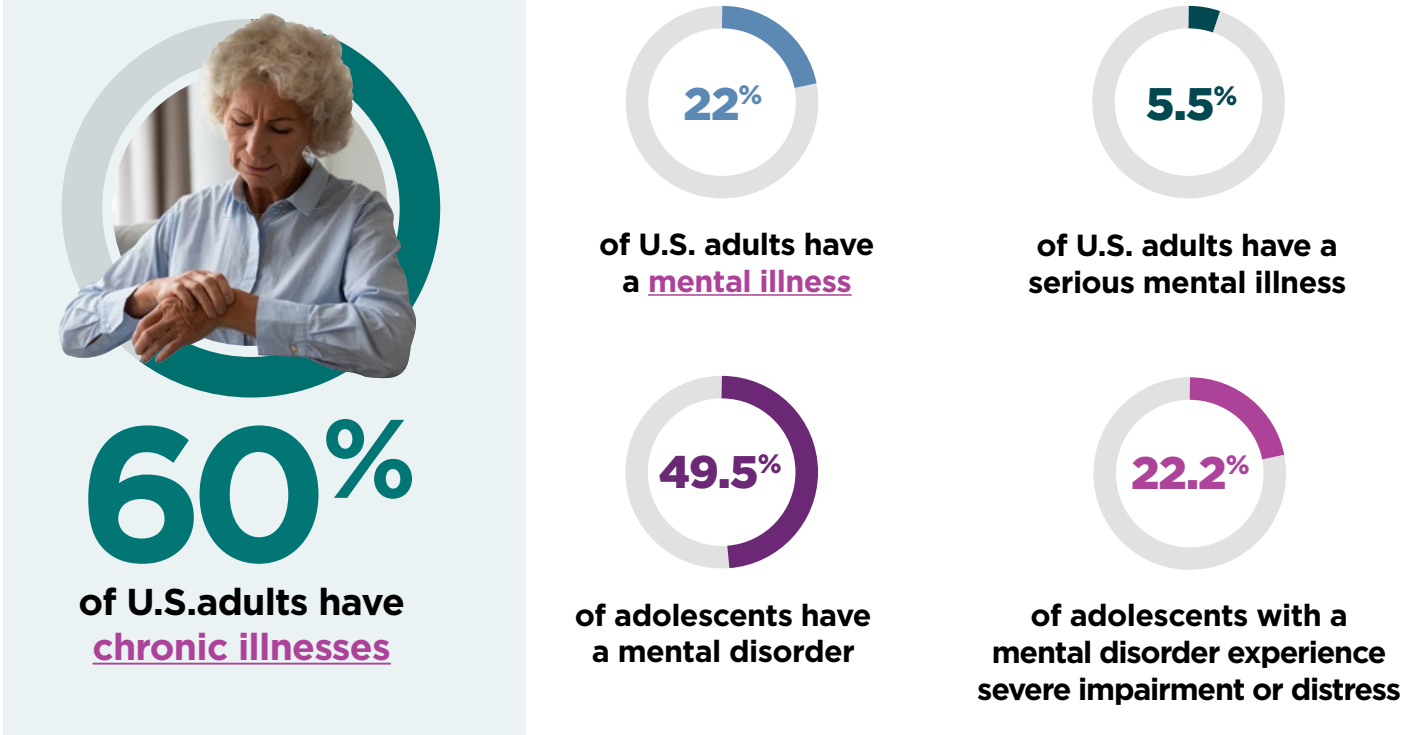
Social determinants of health include:



Source: [Healthy People 2023](#)

The need for whole-person care

There is an urgent need for whole-person care due to the widespread prevalence of mental illness and chronic conditions across the U.S. population. Studies show that:

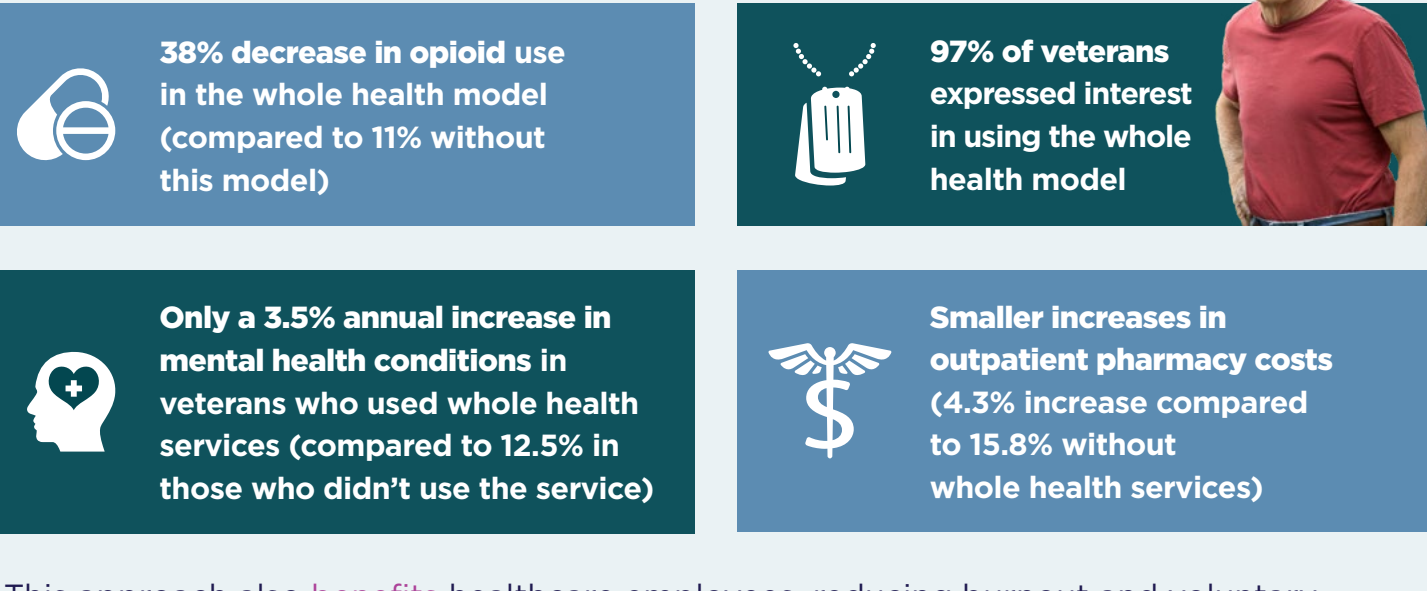


Whole-person care [models](#) recognize the importance of a therapeutic relationship between physician and patient. They treat patients as individuals—more than just a list of diagnoses—and offer a wider range of treatment options, including complementary and integrative medicine.

Source: [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

The promise of whole-person care

Several major [organizations](#), including the Veterans Health Administration, are developing whole-person care models. Research shows promising results for veterans with chronic pain, as this approach addresses both physical and mental health needs:



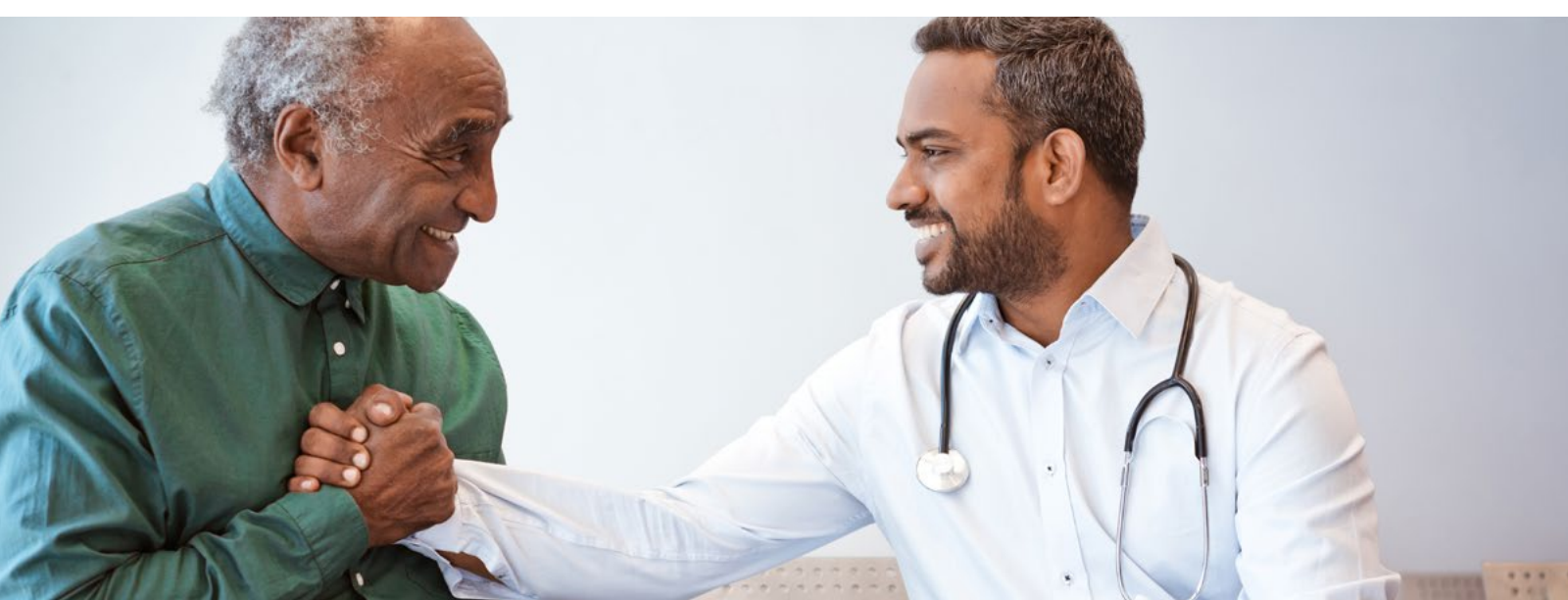
This approach also [benefits](#) healthcare employees, reducing burnout and voluntary turnover while increasing job satisfaction.

Improvements in outcomes

Integrated care models like the [University of Arizona's Integrative Health Center](#) have demonstrated improvements in patient outcomes. **After one year of integrated primary care, patients reported better mental, physical, and overall health, as well as improvements in work productivity, sleep quality, pain, and fatigue.**

Source: [Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#)

- Decreased absenteeism and presenteeism over 12 months
- Decreased activity impairment at 7 days and 12 months
- Significant improvement in overall well-being at 12 months
- Decreased depression and anxiety scores
- Improved sleep quality and physical activity
- Increased consumption of a healthy diet



Improvements in patient satisfaction

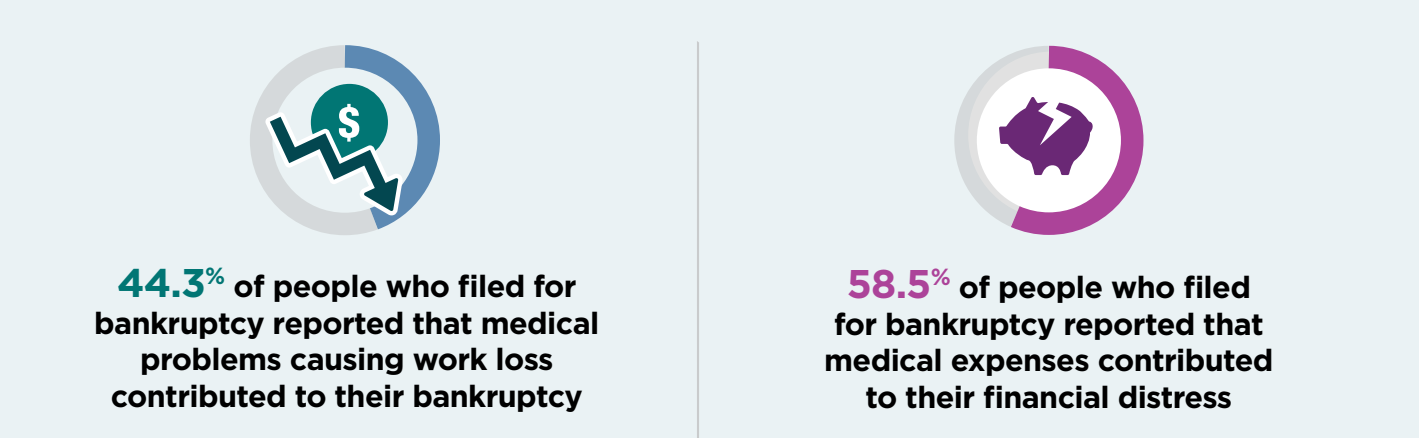
Patients who participate in whole health and integrative care models report significantly higher satisfaction levels. Studies show that patients appreciate the combination of complementary and conventional medicine in their care.

Source: [Medicina \(Kaunas\)](#)

- 89% of patients in the VA whole health system rated their satisfaction between 7 and 10
- 93% of VA patients rated their provider trust as 7 to 10
- +50% More than half of patients in the University of Michigan's integrative care system rated their care as "excellent" or "best ever"
- 55.3% of University of Michigan patients said the plan made a significant difference, and 7.1% said it completely resolved their issue
- 82.4% of patients reported at least some improvement in their condition

Improvements in healthcare costs

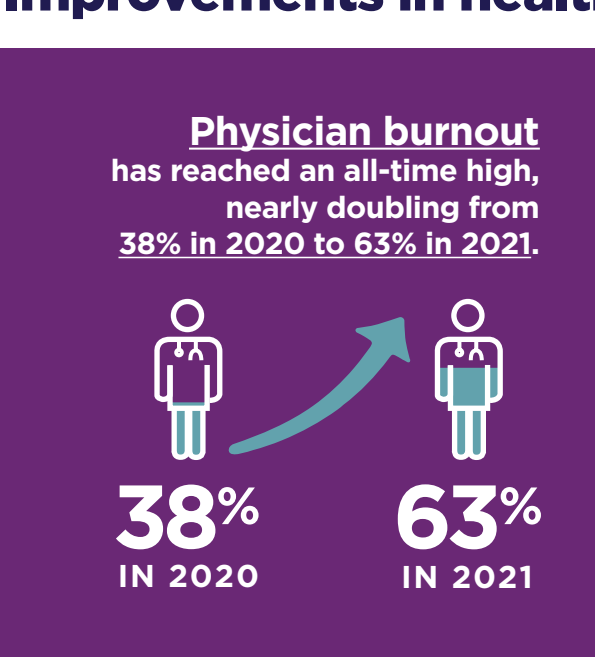
Whole-person care also has the potential to reduce healthcare costs—a critical benefit, given that medical expenses are a major contributor to [personal bankruptcies](#) in the U.S. In fact:



Whole-person care models have been shown to [reduce healthcare costs](#) across multiple categories, including lower rates of hospital admissions and fewer days spent in the hospital for those who participate in integrative medicine programs.

Source: [American Journal of Public Health](#)

Improvements in healthcare costs



Whole-person care models may offer a solution by improving physicians' ability to meet their patients' social needs. [Studies](#) show that physicians working in settings with integrated care teams, including social workers and case managers, report lower burnout rates and a higher ability to address patients' comprehensive health needs.

Ready to embrace a more fulfilling practice model?

To learn more about how whole-person care can enhance your practice and patient outcomes, [click here](#).