



NEWS RELEASE

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**Dignity Health Survey Finds Majority of Americans  
Rate Kindness as Top Factor in Quality Health Care**

*Patients willing to pay more and travel further for kinder treatment;  
Philadelphia receives top grade as kindest city for health care*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – Nov. 13, 2013 – Dignity Health, one of the five largest health systems in the U.S., today announced the findings of a nation-wide survey on the power of humankindness in health care and the perception of kindness in our society.

According to the survey by Wakefield Research for Dignity Health, 87 percent of Americans feel kind treatment by a physician is more important than other key considerations in choosing a health care provider, including average wait time before appointments, distance from home, and the cost of care. Yet, 64 percent have experienced unkind behavior in a health care setting, including the failure of a caregiver to connect on a personal level (38 percent), staff rudeness (36 percent), and poor listening skills (35 percent).

“At Dignity Health, we have long believed that humankindness has the potential to heal and this survey confirms that the vast majority of patients feel the same way,” said Lloyd H. Dean, president and CEO of Dignity Health. “We are committed to providing our patients with experiences where they feel welcomed, respected, and cared for by fostering stronger connections with our doctors, nurses, and caregivers.”

While 95 percent of Americans feel that they themselves are kind, the survey also found that nearly half (48 percent) of Americans feel society is unkind and that a majority of Americans (58 percent) feel that U.S. culture, including media, public figures and their community, does not place a high value on kindness.

“In the midst of a divisive debate on the future of health care, we as an industry have a unique opportunity to focus on the issues that matter to our patients most - listening, healing, and reinforcing the importance of human connection,” continued Dean.

The survey found that when people experience unkindness in a health care setting, a majority feel that their quality of care is negatively affected (93 percent) and withhold information from their physician (54 percent) when speaking with health care professionals. Other key findings include:

- 90 percent of Americans would feel like switching health care providers or physicians after receiving unkind treatment.
- 72 percent of Americans would be willing to pay more for a physician who emphasized kindness when treating patients.
- 88 percent would be willing to travel further to see a health care provider or physician who emphasized kindness when treating patients.
- Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco ranked as the top three cities with the kindest health care providers according to the survey. New York City, Houston, and Los Angeles were ranked the bottom three.
- 95 percent of Americans feel that they themselves are kind and 94 percent make a point of doing something kind for someone at least once during the week.
- However, 50 percent of Americans think children today will grow up to be less kind than their parents.

“As someone who has been a physician for more than 20 years, I have seen numerous occasions where acts of kindness enhanced a patient’s quality of life, helping him or her cope with a diagnosis more effectively,” said Robert L. Wiebe, M.D., chief medical officer for Dignity Health. “This survey should encourage all of us to focus on how we treat people, not just what we treat them for.”

Earlier this year, Dignity Health launched a national campaign, *Hello humankindness* that engages its workforce and the public in improving the health and wellbeing of their communities. Dignity Health also recently partnered with [Kids for Peace](#) to sponsor the upcoming [Great Kindness Challenge](#), which encourages students across the U.S. to perform 50 acts of kindness during the week of January 27-31, 2014. Stay engaged in the conversation by following [#hellohumankindness](#).

### **Methodology**

The Dignity Health survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,000 nationally representative U.S. adults ages 18+, and 400 U.S. adults ages 18+ in each of the top 10 DMAs. The data was collected via an email invitation and an online survey between October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Quotas have been set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the U.S. adult population 18 and older for the nationally representative audience. The survey sample has a margin of error  $\pm 3.1$  percent at a 95 percent level of confidence for the nationally representative audience.

### **About Dignity Health**

Dignity Health, one of the nation’s five largest health care systems, is a 21-state network of nearly 11,000 physicians, 56,000 employees, and more than 300 care centers, including hospitals, urgent and occupational care, imaging centers, home health, and primary care clinics. Headquartered in San Francisco, Dignity Health is dedicated to providing compassionate, high-quality and affordable patient-centered care with special attention to the poor and underserved. In 2012, Dignity Health provided \$1.6 billion in charitable care and services. For more information, please visit our website at [www.dignityhealth.org](http://www.dignityhealth.org). You can also follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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