

Advision Lesotho



28 October 2024  
Maseru, Lesotho

## News release

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### **Basotho overwhelmingly lack medical aid, support government provision of universal health coverage**

Medical aid coverage is extremely limited among the Basotho population: Only one in 50 adults say they have insurance that helps pay their medical bills if they get sick, a new Afrobarometer survey reveals.

Almost two-thirds of citizens say they worry about being able to obtain or afford medical care when they need it. Most Basotho endorse universal access to health care.

Among those who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the past year, three-quarters report that it was easy to obtain the medical assistance they needed, but many say they encountered problems such as long wait times, a lack of medicine or supplies, facilities in poor condition, and absent medical personnel.

#### **Key findings**

- Only one in 50 Basotho (2%) say they have medical aid coverage (Figure 1).
  - Among those who don't have health insurance, six in 10 (60%) say it's because they can't afford it (Figure 2).
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Basotho say they worry "somewhat" or "a lot" about obtaining or affording medical care when they need it (Figure 3).
- Among Basotho who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the year preceding the survey, majorities report encountering long wait times (74%) and inadequate medical supplies (62%), while more than one-third say they found facilities in poor condition (38%) and absent medical staff (34%) (Figure 4).
- Three-fourths (74%) of respondents say it was "easy" or "very easy" to get the medical assistance they needed, but only two-thirds (66%) of the poorest citizens agree (Figure 5).
- Seven in 10 Basotho (71%) say the government should ensure that all citizens have access to adequate health care, even if that means raising taxes (Figure 6).
  - The demand for universal health care is stronger in rural areas than in cities (75% vs. 68%). Citizens with post-secondary education are less likely to consider universal health care a government responsibility (62% vs. 71%-74% among those with less education), as are the poorest respondents compared to their better-off counterparts (67% vs. 72%-73%).

#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

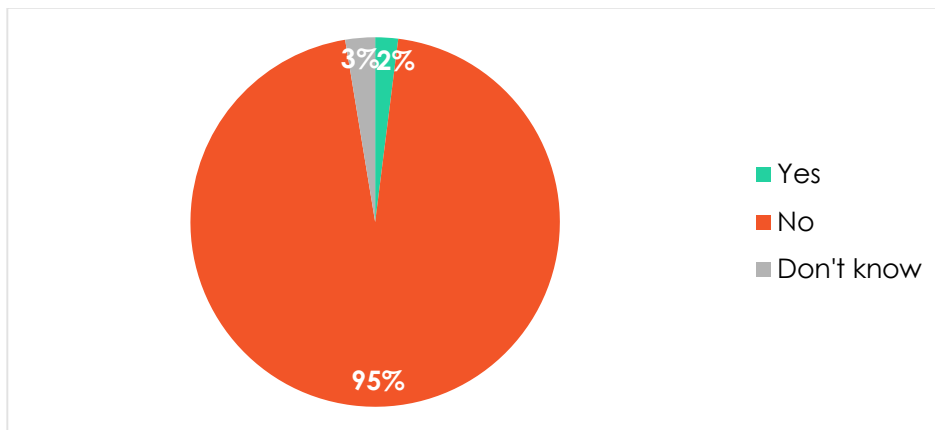
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys

were launched in January 2024. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advision Lesotho, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Basotho in March 2024. The sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020, and 2022.

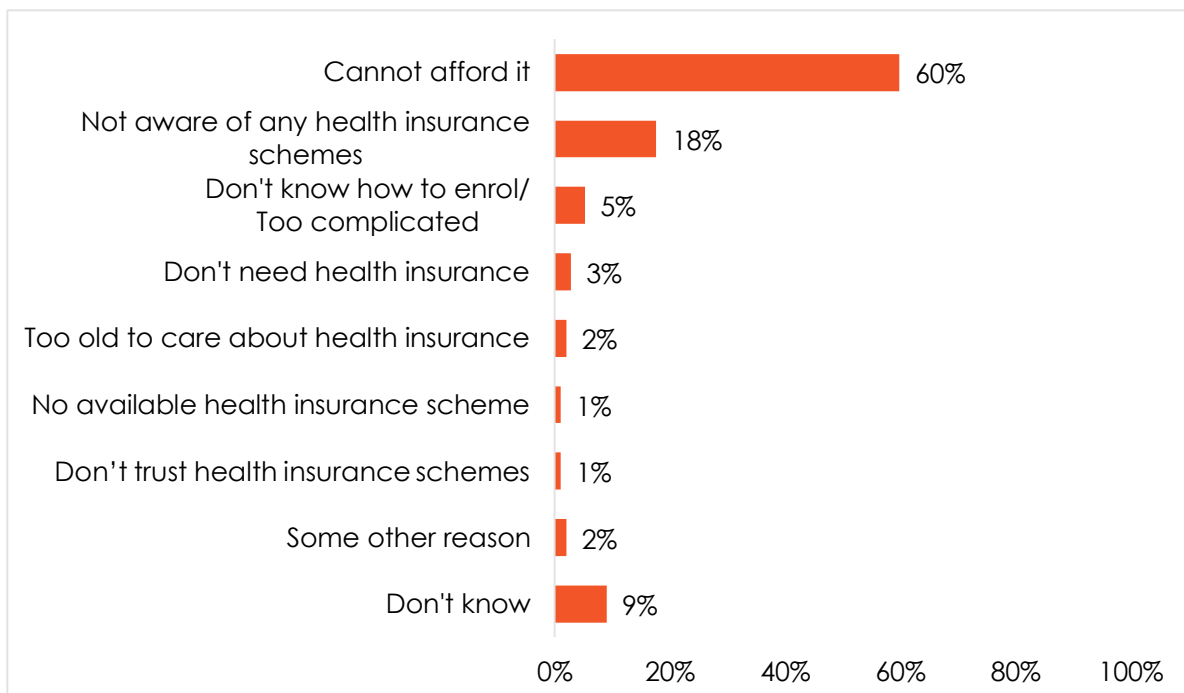
## Charts

**Figure 1: Medical aid coverage | Lesotho | 2024**



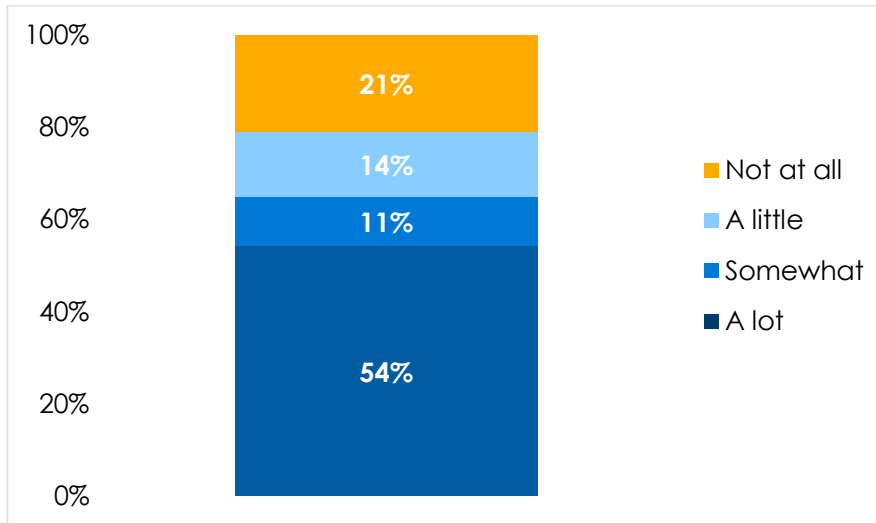
**Respondents were asked:** Do you have any medical aid coverage that helps pay your medical bills if you get sick?

**Figure 2: Reason for not having medical aid coverage | Lesotho | 2024**



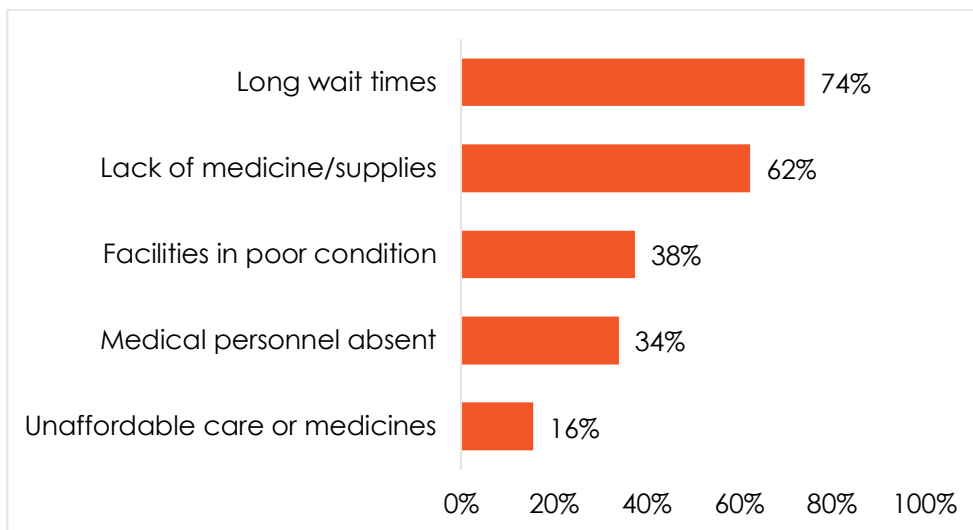
**Respondents who do not have medical aid coverage were asked:** What is the main reason you don't have medical aid coverage? (Respondents who have medical aid coverage are excluded.)

**Figure 3: Worried about obtaining or affording medical care | Lesotho | 2024**



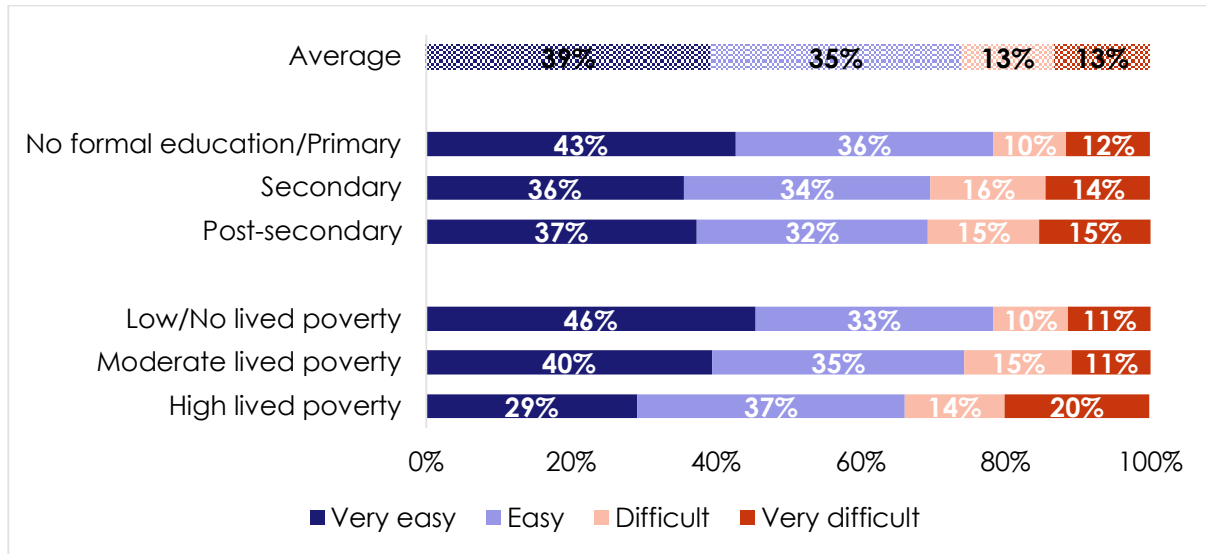
**Respondents were asked:** How much do you personally worry that you or someone in your family will get sick and will be unable to obtain or afford needed medical care?

**Figure 4: Problems encountered at a public clinic or hospital | Lesotho | 2024**



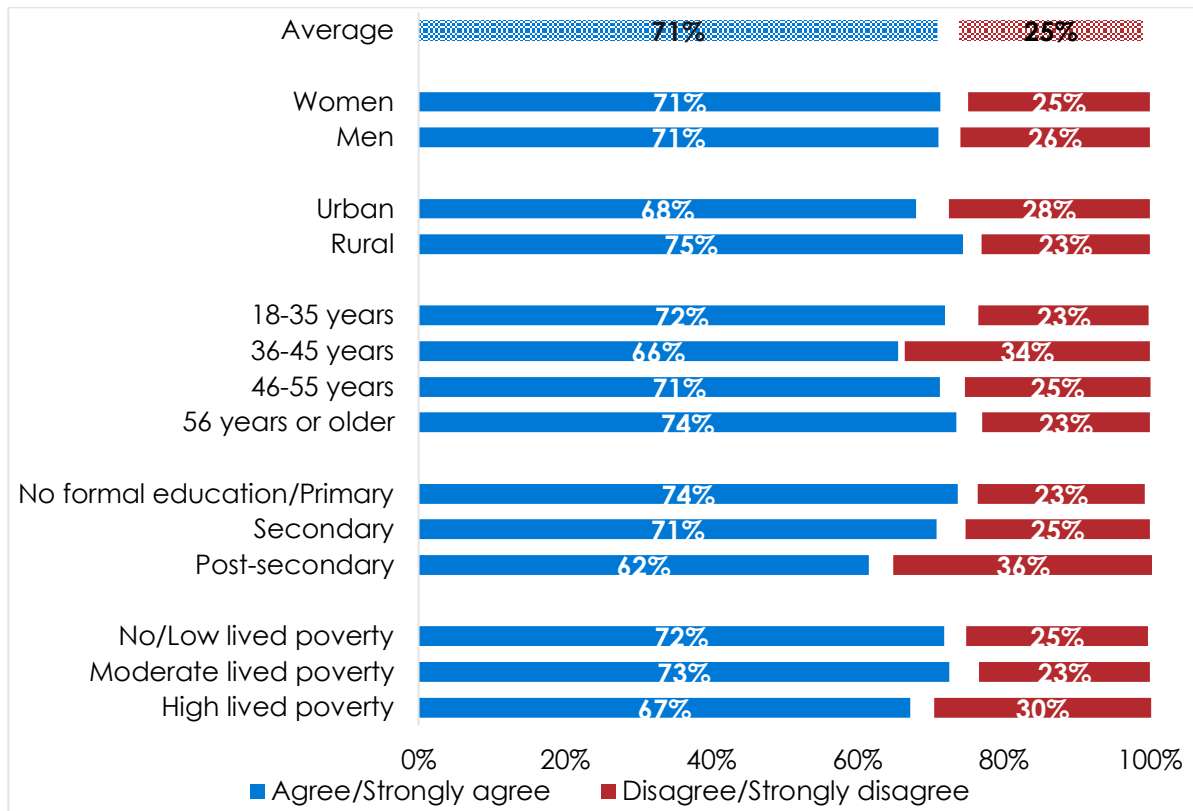
**Respondents who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the previous year were asked:**  
 Have you encountered any of these problems with a public clinic or hospital during the past 12 months:  
 Lack of medicines or other supplies?  
 Absence of doctors or other medical personnel?  
 Long waiting time?  
 Poor condition of facilities?  
 High cost that prevented you from getting the care or medicines you needed?  
 (Respondents who did not have contact with a public clinic or hospital are excluded.)

**Figure 5: Ease of obtaining medical care** | by education and lived poverty  
| Lesotho | 2024



**Respondents who had contact with a public clinic or hospital were asked:** How easy or difficult was it to obtain the medical care or services you needed? (Respondents who didn't have contact with a public clinic or hospital are excluded.)

**Figure 6: Should government ensure universal access to health care?**  
| by demographic group | Lesotho | 2024



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Government should ensure that all citizens have access to adequate health care, even if that means raising taxes.

**For more information, please contact:**

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