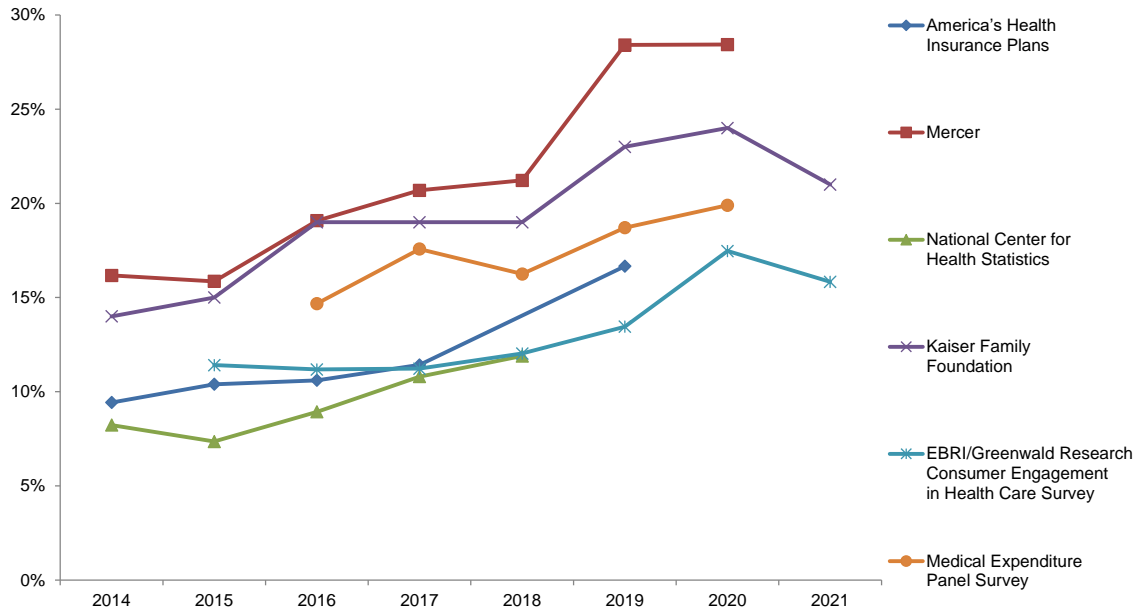


## Growth in Enrollment in HSA-Eligible Health Plans Waning

Health savings account (HSA)-eligible health plans have become an important part of the health benefits landscape since they first became available in 2004. In less than two decades, enrollment increased from zero to between 17 percent and 28 percent of the employment-based market in 2020. Yet, evidence from recent surveys shows that growth has been slowing.

The Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) examined trends in surveys tracking the number of people enrolled in HSA-eligible plans. These surveys were the EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey; America’s Health Insurance Plans; Kaiser Family Foundation; Medical Expenditure Panel Survey; Mercer; and National Center for Health Statistics.<sup>1</sup> While the findings from the surveys differ, the trends are consistent: All show enrollment in HSA-eligible health plans has slowed or even declined. Most recently, two surveys showed that enrollment in HSA-eligible health plans fell in 2021. The EBRI/Greenwald Research Consumer Engagement in Health Care Survey (a survey of individuals enrolled in private health insurance plans) found that enrollment declined from 17.5 percent to 15.8 percent. The Kaiser Family Foundation (an employer survey) found that enrollment declined from 24 percent to 21 percent.

**Percentage of Enrollees in HSA-Eligible Health Plans, 2014–2021**



<sup>1</sup> Note: Not all of the surveys are conducted each year, and there is often a lag between the time the survey has been conducted and when the findings are made available.

## Understanding This Trend

Why might enrollment in HSA-eligible health plans have stalled?

Some employers have added lower deductible options into their plan offerings. Most recently, this may be due to the tight labor market. However, employers had already been adding choice of health plan back into their offerings prior to the pandemic,<sup>2</sup> and enrollment in lower-deductible options may finally be affected by such changes. Some employers may have added lower-deductible options because research has found that HSA-eligible health plans may be associated with a reduction in appropriate preventive care and medication adherence. Recent concern about workers' mental health may be a case in point.

## Enrollment in Plans vs. Growth in HSAs

It is important to note the difference between studies that focus on HSA-eligible health plan *enrollment* and those that focus on *growth in the number* of HSAs, as the latter finds evidence of recent increases. [Devenir](#), for example, collects data from about 100 HSA providers and tracks the number of accounts universally. It shows that the number of accounts continued to increase during the first half of 2021, rising from 30.2 million to 31.1 million. The number of HSAs may include people who have disenrolled from an HSA-eligible health plan. Individuals who disenroll from HSA-eligible health plans may continue to have and use their HSA. As a result, the number of HSAs may not be a good proxy to measure recent trends in HSA-eligible health plan enrollment.

## Conclusion

As the health benefits landscape continues to evolve in response to changes in employer priorities, policy, and plan design, it is important to follow variations in both HSA-eligible health plan enrollment and the growth in the number of HSAs.

## About EBRI

The Employee Benefit Research Institute is a private, nonpartisan, and nonprofit research institute based in Washington, D.C., that focuses on health, savings, retirement, and economic security issues. EBRI does not lobby and does not take policy positions. The work of EBRI is made possible by funding from its members and sponsors, which include a broad range of public and private organizations. For more information visit [www.ebri.org](http://www.ebri.org).

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://blog.wellable.co/hdhp-only-plans-continue-decline-at-large-employers>

###