

Public Opinion on Health Care Policy

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Health care remains a top priority for Americans (69 percent of U.S. voters),¹ who are concerned about cost, access² and choice.³

Many current health care proposals shift control and decision-making to the government—and do not provide what Americans want.

- A majority of Americans oppose a plan that would, under a Medicare for All health care system, decrease access, increase costs, and decrease choices by:⁴
 - Creating “[l]onger wait times to receive health care treatment” (82 percent)
 - Imposing “[m]andatory waiting periods for care” (79 percent)
 - Providing “[f]ewer options for health care providers...and treatments” (76 percent)
 - “Elimin[ating] Medicare” (75 percent)
 - “Increasing taxes” (69 percent)
 - “Elimin[ating] Medicaid” (68 percent)
 - “Elimin[ating] private insurance” (62 percent)

Public opinion is in flux, and malleable based on how the debate is framed.

- According to pollster Dr. Whit Ayres, founder and president of the North Star Opinion Research Corporation: “The numbers that you are going to see...are not in any way cut in stone. They are just a starting point for talking about health care, and they will move all over the place depending on which side is more persuasive in getting its points across. ... [If those] in Congress leave the field without concrete health policy alternatives, forfeiting

that game only hands victory to those who are campaigning for a single-payer plan.”⁵

Americans support plans that lower costs, give them access to high quality of care, and put them in the driver’s seat.⁶ Americans agree:

- America’s health care system should be the best in the world. It should offer lower costs and higher-quality care than it does today. (97 percent)
- Health care policy should empower people—not government bureaucrats or insurance companies—to make decisions for their themselves and their own families. (94 percent)

Almost all Americans are likely to support a health care plan that increases access, lowers costs, and improves choice. They want a plan that will:

- “Encourage health care innovations and options” (96 percent)
- “Use proven tools to help people with pre-existing conditions get care without raising costs for other Americans” (96 percent)
- “Lower health insurance premiums for individuals by as much as 32 percent” (94 percent)
- “Allow more people access to personalized private coverage over government-run health programs like Medicare” (85 percent)

Health Care Should Empower Patients and Ensure Access to Quality and Choice

A healthy America is a strong America. Our health care system should be the best in the world. It should offer more personal choice, more access to doctors, lower costs, higher-quality care, protections for people with pre-existing conditions, and open avenues for innovation.

97% AGREE

Health care plans should remove health care decision-making from Washington, D.C., bureaucrats and insurance company executives and give it to the states, small businesses, nonprofits, and families.

84% AGREE

Health care policy should empower people—not government bureaucrats or insurance companies—to make the best decisions for their families.

94% AGREE

Americans should have more choices for their health care.

91% AGREE

Patients—not bureaucrats—should choose how health care is provided.

90% AGREE

Likelihood of Supporting Plan Proposals

Use proven tools to help people with pre-existing conditions get care without raising costs for other Americans.

TOTAL LIKELY: 96%

66% VERY

30% SOMEWHAT

Lower health insurance premiums for individuals purchasing insurance on their own by as much as 32 percent.

TOTAL LIKELY: 94%

58% VERY

36% SOMEWHAT

Encourage health care innovations and options.

TOTAL LIKELY: 96%

58% VERY

38% SOMEWHAT

Allow more people to choose personalized private coverage over government-run health programs like Medicaid.

TOTAL LIKELY: 85%

48% VERY

37% SOMEWHAT

SOURCE: Survey conducted March 1, 2019, among 1,344 respondents with a margin of error of ±3.1%.

heritage.org

Endnotes

1. Pew Research Center, "Public's 2019 Priorities: Economy, Health Care, Education and Security All Near Top of List," January 24, 2019, <https://www.people-press.org/2019/01/24/publics-2019-priorities-economy-health-care-education-and-security-all-near-top-of-list/> (accessed April 11, 2019).
2. "Healthcare System," Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/4708/healthcare-system.aspx> (accessed April 18, 2019).
3. By comparison, access and cost rank as 25% and 22%, respectively.
4. Morning Consult and *Politico*, "National Tracking Poll No. 181238," December 18-19, 2018, https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/singlepayer_results_mc.pdf (accessed April 11, 2019).
5. Robert E. Moffit, Christopher Pope, and Whit Ayers, "The National Debate Over Government-Controlled Health Care," Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 1305, February 19, 2019, pp. 8-12, <https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/HL1305.pdf>.
6. All remaining results based on an online survey using a national representative sample of 1,344 U.S. voters conducted March 1, 2019, with a margin of error of ±3.1 percent.