



Iowa Health Care Issues Survey Results

Prepared for:

CodeBlueNow!
Seattle, Washington

September 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

CodeBlueNow! commissioned The Gilmore Research Group to conduct a telephone survey of 601 registered voters in Iowa to obtain their opinions regarding health care in the United States. The poll was conducted among randomly selected voters with household telephones between August 23 and September 13, 2007. The average survey lasted just under 14 minutes. The maximum margin of error for a survey of this size is ± 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. Key findings from the survey are summarized below.

KEY FINDINGS

- Survey respondents represent a cross-section of Iowa residents. Poll respondents are very similar to all Iowa residents in terms of age, ethnicity, income, gender and political leanings. The poll slightly over-represents Iowans age 75 and older while under-representing Iowans age 18 to 24. Eight percent of respondents (8%) are employed by, or related to someone employed by, a health care organization or health insurance company.
- Virtually all respondents (96%) have health insurance compared with 89% of all Iowa residents and 84% of all Americans.¹ Nearly nine in ten respondents (88%) have a personal doctor or primary care provider. The vast majority of Iowa voters are satisfied with their access to health care (80%) and the quality of care their family receives (85%). However, just 41% say they are satisfied with the cost of their health care.
- Iowans are less satisfied with the state of health care nationally than they are with their personal health care situation. Fewer than three in ten (26%) are satisfied with Americans' access to health care, 43% are satisfied with the quality of care available to Americans and just 14% are satisfied with the cost of health care.
- Satisfaction with the health care system tends to split along party and economic lines with Democrats being generally less satisfied than Republicans. Those dissatisfied with cost tend to be those with children at home and annual incomes below \$75,000.
- One in five Iowa voters (20%) think today's health care system is better than it was ten years ago, but a strong plurality (43%) think the system is getting worse.
- When asked to name the **best thing** about today's health care system, one in three respondents (33%) was unable to think of anything. Those who did name a positive quality most commonly cited access to care (18%).

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

- When asked to name the **worst thing** about the current national health care system, 86% of voters had something to contribute. Not surprisingly, comments focused on cost (43%) and coverage (30%).
- At least two-thirds of respondents agreed:
 - Health care professionals should provide information on treatment costs and benefits to allow patients to make good choices (84%)
 - Like public utilities, there should be public reporting and accountability for where money comes from as well as how and why it is spent (75%)
 - There needs to be uniform standards or guidelines for health care that professionals should use (74%)
 - Every American should have affordable access to health care services they need (71%)
 - Health care services should stress prevention over high-tech cures (69%)
 - Basic health care benefits should include coverage for any licensed health care professional (68%) like naturopathic physicians, acupuncturists, chiropractors, midwives and massage therapists.
- A significant number of voters were undecided on several issues:
 - Health care is a community responsibility for public safety like the fire department or police (47% agree, 25% neutral, 24% disagree)
 - There should be one organization that oversees the nation's health care and evaluates the effectiveness of all health care services (42% agree, 24% neutral, 30% disagree)
 - Health insurance should be a personal responsibility like automobile insurance (41% agree, 22% neutral, 35% disagree)
 - I would be willing to pay more for health care if I knew what was being covered and where the money was going (38% agree, 27% neutral, 32% disagree)
 - I would be willing to pay more for health care if I was sure it would help my neighbors get the care they need (35% agree, 28% neutral, 34% disagree)
 - Health insurance should be paid for by tax dollars and managed by local, state, or federal government (26% agree, 27% neutral, 42% disagree).
- When asked who they would trust to create a new health care system, a majority of Iowans (51%) said they would trust health care professionals followed by non-profit organizations (35%). About one in five Iowa voters would trust the federal

government (22%) or business professionals (21%) and 17% said they would trust academic institutions to come up with a new system and 3% said there was no one they could trust.

- Compared to the items listed above, a strong majority of Iowa voters (66%) said they would be inclined to trust a non-partisan, non-profit group of citizens and professionals to frame a new national health care system.
- Iowa voters identified the three most important elements of a national health care system as affordability, coverage/access for all Americans and quality of care.
- Respondents were divided when it came to expectations that the 2008 Presidential election will chart a new vision for a revised health care system with 49% saying it is “likely” and 45% saying it is “not likely.”
- When asked which party has the most meaningful health care proposal, approximately three in ten respondents (29%) said they “don’t know.” Independent voters (37%) and Republicans (28%) were significantly more likely than Democrats (20%) to say “don’t know” in response to this question.² Given the bias in “don’t know” responses it is not surprising that Democrats emerged as the party with the “most meaningful proposal” (38%). Sixteen percent of respondents (16%) favored Republican plans and 16% did not like proposals from either party.

CONCLUSIONS

While it appears that Iowa voters are in a good situation personally with respect to health insurance, access to health care, and quality of care, they believe the national health care system is in need of improvement. Iowa voters value having enough information to be active participants in health care decisions. They also want accountability for health care spending, high quality health care standards, and affordable access for all Americans.

Although they see the need for reform, there is no clear consensus about who should lead the charge, who should oversee a national health care system if one emerges, or how it should be paid for. Most voters find the idea of a non-partisan, non-profit organization of citizens and professionals appealing for this role but many want assurances about the expertise of the people within the organization, its goals and how it will be funded. While they do not trust government to solve the problem, they may not embrace a completely private-sector organization either. The only clear agreement is that whatever group tackles the problem needs to rely heavily on health care professionals for advice and counsel.

² Differences between Republicans and Democrats on this question are significant at the 90% level of confidence.