



Washington D.C. elites believe controlling healthcare costs ranks more important than expanding coverage, survey finds

Majority rejects complete overhaul, instead suggests improvements to current system

New York, June 29, 2009 – While Washington, D.C.-elites overwhelmingly support the need for national healthcare reform, a majority believes that controlling the costs of healthcare is more important than expanding coverage, according to a new survey released by strategic communications firm Burson-Marsteller and research firm Penn, Schoen & Berland (PSB). Overall, respondents agree that changes should make healthcare more accessible to all Americans and that the government must work with the private healthcare industry to meet these goals. The survey polled residents of the Washington, D.C. metro area who have at least a college education, earn \$100,000 or more a year, read at least two major newspapers frequently and follow political news closely.

“This survey of Washington, D.C.-elites provides clarity as to how the Capital’s elites view these key healthcare issues amid the increasing debate,” says Chris Foster, Burson-Marsteller US Healthcare Chair. “Their opinions, as publicly influential and successful citizens, suggest broader trends across the nation.”

The study finds that healthcare reform remains closely tied to views about economic recovery. For instance, 73 percent of respondents believe changes in healthcare policy will stimulate the economy. Further, 70 percent of those surveyed believe that current healthcare costs hurt America from being competitive with other nations.

Yet, respondents are reluctant to sign-on for a complete overhaul of healthcare, and instead believe that the administration should focus on improving the current system. They suggest wellness incentives and preventative service offerings and improvements in technology should be used to reduce costs.

Some of the survey’s other key findings included:

- A slight majority of respondents (56 percent) believes that the large percent of US GDP devoted to healthcare indicates that the system is broken and needs reform, whereas 44 percent believe the figure reflects the fact the U.S. has an advanced healthcare system.
- Democrats and Independents ranked healthcare reform first on importance for the administration to address from a list of the key issues facing the Obama administration, which excluded the economy. However, Republicans placed healthcare reform sixth.
- Over two third of respondents who had heard about health care reform issue said what they heard has caused them to be more supportive of healthcare reform.

PSB, in conjunction with Burson-Marsteller, surveyed 300 Washington, D.C. area elites online from April 17 – 19, 2009. DC elites were defined as: “Respondents who live in D.C. metro area, have at least a college education, earn \$100,000 or more a year, read at least two major newspapers frequently and rate themselves a 5+ on a scale of 1-9 of following political news.”

About Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates

Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, a unit of the WPP group (NASDAQ: WPPGY) is a global research-based consultancy that specializes in messaging and communications strategy for blue-chip political, corporate and entertainment clients. We have over 30 years of experience in leveraging unique insights about consumer opinion to provide clients with a competitive advantage - what we call Winning Knowledge™. PSB executes polling and message testing services for Fortune 100 corporations and has helped elect more than 30 presidents and prime ministers around the world. More information is available at www.psbresearch.com.

About Burson-Marsteller

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