

Poll: Most Voters Want Health Overhaul That Improves Care, Lowers Costs

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Although much attention in health overhaul legislation has been given to a public plan option, employer mandates and other hotly contested proposals, most voters favor a health system overhaul focused on disease prevention, health information technology and care coordination, according to a survey released Thursday by pollsters from both parties.

Eighty-five percent of Democratic poll respondents and 60 percent of Republicans in the poll said they would support an overhaul package that eliminates co-payments and deductibles for chronic disease treatment, expands preventive services such as smoking cessation, ensures that doctors have information on effective treatments and guarantees coordinated, personalized treatment plans.

The telephone poll, conducted by Republican research group Public Opinion Strategies and Democratic firm Lake Research Partners on behalf of advocacy group America's Agenda, surveyed 1000 likely voters nationwide.

Mark Blum, executive director of [America's Agenda](#), said the poll shows bipartisan support for overhauling the health care delivery system with the goal of reducing cost and improving quality of care.

"This is a set of health reforms that directly address Americans' concerns," Blum said, adding that lawmakers should focus on these concerns if they want public support for legislation.

Sixty-two percent of respondents said they would be more likely to vote for a lawmaker who voted for a health overhaul package that would focus on prevention and care coordination.

Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners, said support for disease prevention crosses party lines. When asked if the health care system should emphasize prevention or treating sickness, about half of respondents said more prevention is needed. Sixteen percent said the

current system strikes the right balance, and 16 percent said more emphasis should go to treatment.

“There is true, bipartisan consensus on the prevent prevention agenda,” Lake said. Respondents favored proposals to create incentives in health plans for patient involvement in preventing obesity and chronic diseases, although voters showed less support for using federal funding for national campaigns against obesity and smoking.

Lawmakers have said a final overhaul package will include prevention measures, although the Congressional Budget Office says preventive care provided by doctors doesn’t save money.

Lake also said about 75 percent of poll respondents said they would support improving coordination between primary physicians and other providers by enabling family doctors to lead teams of health professionals and expanding health information technology.

House Democrats formally introduced health overhaul legislation Tuesday, and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved its version Wednesday.

Blum said the poll did not question voters on topics like a public plan, an insurance exchange, and individual and employer mandates — elements which Blum called “divisive” — because the groups sought to identify areas of bipartisan consensus.