

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Richard Kirsch, Campaign Manager and Ethan Rome, Deputy Campaign Manager

RE: **National Poll – Voters Support Choice of Public Health Insurance Plan**

DATE: February 4, 2009

[Health Care for America Now](#) supports the choice of a public health insurance plan as part of **comprehensive reform** to bring down costs, make coverage affordable, force private health insurance companies to compete and guarantee that quality, affordable coverage will be there for people no matter what happens.

In January we commissioned Lake Research Partners to conduct a national survey of 800 voters to find out how the public views the choice of a public health insurance plan and how it stood up to the most common insurance industry arguments. We learned five major lessons.

1. **The choice of a public health insurance plan enjoys intense and widespread support and is a political asset in the health care reform debate.** A public health insurance plan is supported by 73% of voters, even when they hear the sharpest insurance industry attacks, such as a public health insurance plan would lead to lower quality health care, more expensive health care, or big government. This includes Democrats (77%), Independents (79%) and Republicans (63%).
2. **Voters value having the *choice* of a public health insurance option as a guaranteed backup.** Specifically, 68% agree that a public health insurance option ensures that quality, affordable health care coverage will be there when they need it no matter what happens. This is especially important because of the job insecurity voters feel in the current economic environment.
3. **Voters believe that a public health insurance option will lower costs, improve quality, and increase competition.** For example, 61% agree that a public health insurance plan will be better able to control costs by using its purchasing power to drive competition. 60% agree that if private insurers are more efficient than government, they won't have any trouble competing with a public health insurance plan. 66% agree that a public health insurance plan will provide a choice with a standard, comprehensive package of benefits including a wide choice of doctors.
4. **Voters reject the insurance industry's arguments.** In paired statements supporting and attacking a public health insurance plan, a majority of voters choose the public health insurance option every time. For example, 62% of voters believe a public health insurance plan will spend less on profits and administration and force private insurers to compete while only 28% of voters believe the attack that a public health insurance plan would be a "big, government bureaucracy."
5. **Lastly, voters were most responsive to the phrase *public health insurance plan* when referring to that option.** And while support for a public health insurance plan is broad and deep generally, it is highest when referring to it as part of President Obama's plan.

Additional polling data is available online and in the attached [memorandum](#) and [presentation](#).