



Lake Snell Perry Mermin Meadow Gotoff Ulibarri

Celinda Lake
President

Alysia Snell
Partner

Michael Perry
Partner

David Mermin
Partner

Robert G. Meadow, Ph.D.
Partner

Daniel R. Gotoff
Partner

Joshua E. Ulibarri
Partner

Rick A. Johnson
Vice President

Tresa Udem
Vice President

Robert X. Hillman
Chief Financial Officer

Alan C. Wolf
Chief Operating Officer

Memorandum

To: Interested Parties

From: Celinda Lake and David Mermin, Lake Research Partners

Subject: Voter support for a public health insurance plan

Date: January 28, 2009

A new poll conducted by Lake Research Partners¹ on behalf of Health Care for America NOW! (HCAN) shows **intense and widespread voter support for the choice of a public health insurance plan as part of comprehensive health care reform. Nearly three out of four voters prefer having a choice of public or private health insurance over either an all-private or an all-public system.**

Support for a public health insurance plan holds up very strongly even after voters hear the most common attacks on the plan – such as claiming that a public health insurance plan will lead to increased costs, big government or lower quality. **In paired statements supporting and attacking a public health insurance plan, a majority of voters choose the statement backing a public health insurance option every time, and we win each debate by a double digit margin.** Overall support for a public health insurance plan holds firm when re-tested after all the attacks.

Voters strongly value having a **choice** of private or public health insurance plans and support having the **guaranteed, affordable coverage** that a public health insurance plan provides. They also believe that a public health insurance plan will help **contain costs** in ways that private insurers have failed to do.

¹ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers January 8-13, 2009. The survey reached a total of 800 likely voters nationwide. The margin of error for the total results is +/- 3.5%

Key findings:

- ✓ **Voters overwhelmingly want everyone to have a choice of private health insurance or a public health insurance plan** (73%), while just 15% prefer everyone having private health insurance and 9% support only public insurance. The preference for a choice of public and private health insurance plans extends across all demographic and partisan groups, including Democrats (77%), Independents (79%) and Republicans (63%).
- ✓ Voters firmly reject an attack that a public health insurance plan will shift higher costs onto the privately insured (25%), with a solid majority (61%) agreeing that **a public health insurance plan will be better able to control health care costs by using its purchasing power to drive competition.**
 - When the Veterans Administration is added to this response as an example of negotiating lower prices, the response is even more effective (65%).
- ✓ **Voters believe a public health insurance plan will lower costs by providing real competition with private insurance while spending less on profits and administration** (62%), while only 28% agree with the attack that a public health insurance plan will be a big, costly government bureaucracy.
- ✓ **Voters believe if private insurers are really more efficient than government, then they won't have any trouble competing with a public health insurance plan option** (60%), and reject the notion that a public health insurance plan will have an unfair advantage over private plans (23%).
- ✓ Voters reject the idea that a public health insurance plan will cause millions of people to be dumped from their private coverage (27%), and a majority agree with the response that millions of people are already losing their coverage every year and that **a choice of private or public health insurance plans will make sure that Americans always have quality, affordable care** (61%). They even more strongly reject this attack (21% to 68%) when the attack uses the term “government plan.”
- ✓ Voters are unconvinced that a public health insurance plan will force people into lower quality care including rationing and long waits (26%), while two thirds agree that **a public health insurance plan will provide a choice with a standard, comprehensive package of benefits and a wide choice of doctors** (66%).
- ✓ After hearing all of these attacks and responses, overall support for a choice of public or private health insurance plans remains firm at 72%, while 16% choose a private-only and 9% a public-only system.