



Topline

Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: January 2010

January 2010

Methodology

This *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* was designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation led by Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., including Claudia Deane, Liz Hamel, Carolina Gutiérrez, and Sarah Cho. The survey was conducted January 7 through January 12, 2010, among a nationally representative random sample of 2,002 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (1,350) and cell phone (652, including 255 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

In order to gauge both knowledge and opinions about a long list of elements included in the legislation currently being discussed in Congress, most questions on the survey were asked of either random half-samples (roughly 1,000 respondents each) or quarter-samples (roughly 500 respondents each). Full details about which questions were asked of which samples are included in the topline document.¹

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on half-samples, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points, and for results based on quarter-samples it is plus or minus 5 percentage points. For results based on other subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Trends in this document come from surveys listed on the last page.

Values less than 0.5% are indicated by an asterisk (*).

“VOL” indicates that a response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice.

Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.

¹Note that the questions measuring knowledge about the different elements included in the health care legislation and the questions asking whether the inclusion of different elements makes respondents more or less likely to support the legislation were asked of separate half-samples, so the results for these two sets of questions cannot be cross-tabulated.

1. Which comes closer to describing your own views? Given the serious economic problems facing the country (we cannot afford to take on health care reform right now) OR (it is more important than ever to take on health care reform now)? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

Based on one-half sample (n=1,022)

	<u>Take on now</u>	<u>Cannot afford</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
01/10	54	39	7
12/09	54	41	5
11/09 (half sample. n=620)	58	36	6
10/09	55	41	4
09/09	57	39	4
08/09	53	42	6
07/09	56	39	5
06/09	61	35	4
04/09	59	37	4
02/09	62	34	4
12/08	61	37	2
10/08	62	34	5

2. How closely have you been following discussions in Washington about health care reform? Very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all?

	<u>01/10</u>	<u>12/09</u>	<u>11/09</u>	<u>10/09</u>	<u>09/09</u>	<u>08/09</u>	<u>07/09</u>	<u>04/09</u>	<u>02/09</u>
Very closely	28	34	28	34	36	33	27	25	23
Somewhat closely	42	42	47	44	45	45	46	47	46
Not too closely	19	16	21	16	15	15	19	21	21
Not at all	10	7	5	5	4	7	7	6	9
Don't know/Refused	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	*	1

3. As of right now, do you generally (support) or generally (oppose) the health care proposals being discussed in Congress? (Is that strongly support/oppose or somewhat support/oppose?) (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

Based on one-half sample (n=980)

	<u>01/10</u>
Strongly support	19
Somewhat support	23
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	31
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	16

4. Do you think (INSERT AND ROTATE) would be (better off) or (worse off) if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?
 (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES) [READ IF NECESSARY: "Would (INSERT ITEM) be better off or worse off if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?"]

		<u>Better off</u>	<u>Worse off</u>	<u>Wouldn't make much difference</u>	<u>(VOL.) It depends</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
a. You and your family						
	01/10	32	33	29	3	4
	12/09	35	27	32	3	3
	11/09 (n=620)	42	24	27	3	4
	10/09	41	27	28	2	3
	09/09	42	23	28	4	3
	08/09	36	31	27	2	4
	07/09	39	21	32	4	3
	06/09	39	16	36	3	5
	04/09	43	14	36	4	4
	02/09	38	11	43	4	3
b. The country as a whole						
	01/10	42	37	12	3	5
	12/09	45	31	17	4	3
	11/09 (n=620)	54	27	11	3	5
	10/09	53	28	12	2	4
	09/09	53	26	14	4	4
	08/09	45	34	14	3	4
	07/09	51	23	16	4	6
	06/09	57	16	19	3	5
	04/09	56	15	21	3	5
	02/09	59	12	19	5	5

5. I'm going to read you a list of specific reform proposals. For each, please tell me whether you think it is included in the health care reform legislation being discussed in Congress or not. First, to the best of your knowledge, would you say the legislation being debated does or does not (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)? **

<i>Items a-k based on one-quarter sample (n=511)</i>	<u>Total Aware</u>	<u>Does include</u>	<u>House does, Senate doesn't¹</u>	<u>Total Unaware</u>	<u>Does not include</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
a. Prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage or charging higher premiums because of a person's medical history or health condition	61	60	1	39	29	10
b. Place a limit on the amount that insurance companies can charge older people compared to younger people	44	43	1	56	35	21
c. Provide tax credits to small businesses that want to offer coverage to their employees	52	52	*	48	32	16
d. Penalize all but the smallest employers if they don't offer health insurance to their workers	58	57	*	42	30	12
e. Increase income taxes for the highest income Americans as a way to help pay for health reform	68	68	1	32	23	9
f. Require drug makers, medical device manufacturers and health insurance companies to pay a tax based on how much business they have, to help pay for health reform	49	48	1	51	29	22
g. Prohibit use of federal money for abortions, except as allowed by current law, which is in cases of rape, incest or if the woman's life is in danger	56	54	2	44	29	15
h. Specify the amount of money that insurance companies must spend on paying for health care compared with the amount they spend on administrative costs and their own profits	43	41	2	57	31	26
i. Limit future increases in Medicare payments to health care providers as a way to help pay for health reform	47	46	1	53	34	19
j. Expand the existing Medicaid program to cover more low-income uninsured Americans	62	61	*	38	26	12
k. Allow children to stay on their parents' insurance plans through age 25	48	47	1	52	33	19

**Note: items a – k and l – u asked of two separate quarter samples.

¹ *House does, Senate doesn't/Senate does, House doesn't* is a volunteered response.

Q5 continued...

	<u>Total Aware</u>	<u>Does include</u>	<u>House does, Senate doesn't²</u>	<u>Total Unaware</u>	<u>Does not include</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
Items l-u based on one-quarter sample (n=511)						
l. Prohibit insurance companies from charging women higher premiums than men	37	36	1	63	37	25
m. Prohibit insurance companies from setting a limit on the total amount they will spend on a person's health care over their lifetime	42	41	1	58	36	22
n. Provide financial help to lower and middle income Americans who don't get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	72	72	*	28	20	8
o. Require nearly all Americans to have a minimum level of health insurance or else pay a fine	57	57	*	43	32	11
p. Help close the Medicare "doughnut hole" or "coverage gap" so seniors would no longer have a period where they are responsible for paying the full cost of their medicines	44	43	1	56	33	23
q. Increase the Medicare payroll tax for higher income Americans as a way to help pay for health reform	65	64	1	35	20	15
r. Impose a tax on insurers who offer the most expensive health plans, also called Cadillac plans, to help pay for health reform	51	50	1	49	22	27
s. Create a health insurance exchange or marketplace where small businesses and people who don't get coverage through their employers can shop for insurance and compare prices and benefits	58	58	1	42	25	17
t. Require insurance plans to offer a minimum package of health insurance benefits, to be defined by the federal government	63	62	1	37	20	17
u. Prevent illegal immigrants from receiving any federal money to purchase health insurance	40	39	1	60	41	20

² House does, Senate doesn't/Senate does, House doesn't is a volunteered response.

6. As far as you know, is the health reform bill currently being discussed in Congress expected to (increase) the federal budget deficit over the next ten years, (decrease) the deficit over the next ten years, or is it not expected to have much impact on the deficit? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)**

Based on one-quarter sample (n=511)

	<u>01/10</u>
Increase the budget deficit	60
Decrease the budget deficit	15
Not impact the deficit	17
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	7

7. If Congress and the president did pass a health care reform bill, when would you expect that most of the provisions would take effect: this year, next year, 3 or 4 years from now, or further in the future than that? **

Based on one-quarter sample (n=511)

	<u>01/10</u>
This year	11
Next year	25
Three or four years from now	45
Further in the future	17
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	2

**Note: Questions 6 and 7 asked of a separate quarter sample from Questions 8 and 9.

8. As far as you know, would the health reform bill currently being discussed in Congress provide coverage to all of the country's uninsured, most of the uninsured, only some of the uninsured, or none of the uninsured?*

Based on one-quarter sample (n=511)

	<u>01/10</u>
Would cover ALL of the uninsured	21
Would cover MOST of the uninsured	35
Would cover ONLY SOME of the uninsured	32
Would cover NONE of the uninsured	5
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	7

9. As far as you know, if Congress and the president did pass a health care reform bill, would most people who currently get health insurance coverage through their employers keep their existing health insurance arrangements or would most people have to change their existing health insurance arrangements?*

Based on one-quarter sample (n=511)

	<u>01/10</u>
Could keep existing health insurance arrangements	59
Would have to change existing health insurance arrangements	30
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	11

**Note: Questions 6 and 7 asked of a separate quarter sample from Questions 8 and 9.

10. I'm going to read you several specific elements that are included in the health care legislation currently being debated in Congress. For each, please tell me if that particular element makes you (more) likely to support the legislation, (less) likely to support it, or doesn't make much difference either way. First, the legislation would (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE). The legislation would (INSERT NEXT ITEM). (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

READ AS NECESSARY: Does that make you (more) likely to support the bill, (less) likely to support it, or doesn't it make much difference either way?

	More likely to <u>support</u>	Less likely to <u>support</u>	No <u>difference</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
Items a-n based on one-quarter sample (n=493)				
a. Prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage or charging higher premiums because of a person's medical history or health condition	63	24	11	2
b. Place a limit on the amount that insurance companies can charge older people compared to younger people	53	25	19	3
c. Provide tax credits to small businesses that want to offer coverage to their employees	73	11	14	2
d. Penalize all but the smallest employers if they don't offer health insurance to their workers	45	33	16	5
e. Increase income taxes for individuals making more than \$500,000 a year and couples making more than \$1 million a year as a way to help pay for health reform	59	24	16	1
f. Require drug makers, medical device manufacturers and health insurance companies to pay a tax based on how much business they have, to help pay for health reform	53	26	17	4
g. Prohibit use of federal money for abortions, except as allowed by current law, which is in cases of rape, incest or if the woman's life is in danger	55	26	16	4
h. Specify the amount of money that insurance companies must spend on paying for health care compared with the amount they spend on administrative costs and their own profits	52	19	21	8
i. Limit future increases in Medicare payments to health care providers as a way to help pay for health reform	43	35	15	6
j. Expand the Medicaid program to cover everyone with incomes under 133 percent of the federal poverty level, which is about \$29,000 a year for a family of four	62	22	14	3
k. Create a government-administered public health insurance option to compete with private health insurance plans	53	31	13	3
l. Reduce the federal deficit by at least \$132 billion over 10 years	56	20	18	6
m. Not fully take effect until 2013 at the earliest	23	40	34	4
n. Allow children to stay on their parents' insurance plans through age 25	60	22	15	3

Continued on next page

Q10 continued

	<u>More likely to support</u>	<u>Less likely to support</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
Items o-aa based on one-quarter sample (n=487)				
o. Prohibit insurance companies from charging women higher premiums than men	50	31	17	2
p. Prohibit insurance companies from setting a limit on the total amount they will spend on a person's health care over their lifetime	48	34	16	1
q. Provide financial help to people who have incomes below 400 percent of the federal poverty level – about \$88,000 for a family of four – and who don't get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	57	24	17	2
r. Require nearly all Americans to have a minimum level of health insurance or else pay a fine	22	62	12	4
s. Help close the Medicare “doughnut hole” or “coverage gap” so seniors would no longer have a period where they are responsible for paying the full cost of their medicines	60	21	15	3
t. Increase the Medicare payroll tax for individuals making more than \$200,000 a year as a way to help pay for health reform	49	31	18	2
u. Impose a tax on insurers who offer the most expensive health plans, also called Cadillac plans, to help pay for health reform	35	40	21	4
v. Create a health insurance exchange or marketplace where small businesses and people who don't get coverage through their employers can shop for insurance and compare prices and benefits	67	16	14	2
w. Require insurance plans to offer a minimum package of health insurance benefits, to be defined by the federal government	38	43	16	3
x. Prevent illegal immigrants from receiving any federal money to purchase health insurance	52	29	17	2
y. Mean that most people who get health insurance through their jobs will keep the plans they have now	66	10	19	4
z. Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	19	51	24	6
aa. Provide coverage to at least 31 million people who are now uninsured	56	24	16	4

(READ) Finally, I have just a few questions we will use to describe the people who took part in our survey...

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX

Male	48
Female	52

D2. In general, would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent	22
Very good	33
Good	31
Only fair	10
Poor	4
Don't know/Refused	*

D3. Are you NOW self-employed, working full-time for an employer, working part-time for an employer, are you retired, or are you not employed for pay?

Self-employed	11
Full-time for an employer	39
Part-time for an employer	9
Retired	20
Not employed	14
Homemaker (VOL.)	2
Student (VOL.)	2
Disabled (VOL.)	3
Don't know/Refused	*

D4. Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan or do you not have health insurance at this time? (READ IF NECESSARY: A health plan would include any private insurance plan through your employer or a plan that you purchased yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or [Medicaid/Medi-CAL])?

Covered by health insurance	81
Not covered by health insurance	19
Don't know/Refused	*

D4a. Which of the following is your MAIN source of health insurance coverage? Is it a plan through your or your spouse's employer, a plan you purchased yourself, are you covered by Medicare or (Medicaid/Medi-CAL), some other government program, or do you get your health insurance from somewhere else?

Based on those who are insured (n=1,716)

Plan through your/your spouse's employer	55
Plan you purchased yourself	12
Medicare	20
Medicaid/Medi-CAL	6
Some other government program	4
Somewhere else	2
Don't know/Refused	1

D5. What is your age? [ENTER AGE] / ASK IF REFUSED:

D6. Could you please tell me if you are between the ages of (READ)

18-29	20
30-49	35
50-64	27
65 and older	18
Undesignated	*

D8. In politics today, do you consider yourself a [ROTATE: Republican, Democrat/ Democrat, Republican], an Independent, or what?

Republican	22
Democratic	36
Independent	32
Or What? (<i>Other</i> and <i>None</i> included here)	7
Don't know/Refused	4

D9. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school? (DO NOT READ)

None, or grade 1-8	3
High School incomplete (grade 9-11)	9
High School graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)	31
Technical, trade or vocational school AFTER high school	4
Some college, no four-year degree (includes associate degree)	25
College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other four-year degree)	18
Post-graduate or professional schooling after college (e.g., towards a Master's degree or Ph.D; law or medical school)	10
Don't know/Refused	*

D11. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

D12. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race? (IF RESPONDENT SAYS HISPANIC ASK: Do you consider yourself a white Hispanic or a black Hispanic?)

White, non-Hispanic	69
Total non-White	29
Black or African-American	11
Hispanic	13
Asian	3
Other mixed race	2
Undesignated	2

D13. Last year -- that is, in 2009 -- what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. (READ)

Less than \$20,000	18
\$20,000 to less than \$30,000	13
\$30,000 to less than \$40,000	10
\$40,000 to less than \$50,000	9
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	13
\$75,000 to less than \$90,000	7
\$90,000 to less than \$100,000	4
\$100,000 or more	13
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	14

END OF INTERVIEW: That's all the questions I have. Thanks for your time.

Trend Information:

- 12/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (December 7-13, 2009)
- 11/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (November 5-12, 2009)
- 10/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (October 8-15, 2009)
- 09/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (September 11-18, 2009)
- 08/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (August 4-11, 2009)
- 07/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (July 7-14, 2009)
- 06/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (June 1-8, 2009)
- 04/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (April 2-8, 2009)
- 02/09: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (February 3-12, 2009)
- 12/08: Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *The Public's Health Care Agenda for the New President and Congress* (December 4-14, 2008)
- 10/08: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008* (October 8-13, 2008)



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This publication (#8042-T) is available on the
Kaiser Family Foundation website at www.kff.org.

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