



Topline

Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: February 2010

February 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 February 11 through 16, 2010, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,201 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (800) and cell phone (401, including 192 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on 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.

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

	<u>02/10</u>	<u>01/10</u>
Strongly support	24	19
Somewhat support	19	23
Somewhat oppose	11	10
Strongly oppose	32	31
Depends on which proposal (House/Senate, Dems/Reps) (VOL.)	3	n/a
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	12	16

2. 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	02/10	34	32	26	3	5
	01/10	32	33	29	3	4
	12/09	35	27	32	3	3
	11/09	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	02/10	45	34	12	4	5
	01/10	42	37	12	3	5
	12/09	45	31	17	4	3
	11/09	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

3. I'm going to read some reasons people give for supporting the proposed health care legislation. After I read each one, please tell me if it is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you yourself support the legislation. First (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)? Is this a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you support the plan? How about (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)...

Based on those who support legislation (n=483)

	<u>Major reason for supporting</u>	<u>Minor reason for supporting</u>	<u>Not a reason for supporting</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. To make sure more people can get and afford health insurance coverage	88	10	2	-
b. To bring down the cost of health insurance and health care	84	13	3	*
c. To reform insurance company practices such as making sure they have to sell policies to people with pre-existing health conditions	81	15	4	1
d. To strengthen the country's long term economic situation	67	23	9	1
e. To help fill the coverage gap, or doughnut hole, in Medicare's prescription drug coverage	62	26	9	2

4. I'm going to read some reasons people give for opposing the proposed health care legislation. After I read each one, please tell me if it is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you yourself oppose the legislation. First (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)? Is this a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you oppose the plan? How about (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)...

Based on those who oppose legislation (n=535)

	<u>Major reason for opposing</u>	<u>Minor reason for opposing</u>	<u>Not a reason for opposing</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. We can't afford to pay for health care reform right now	73	17	8	1
b. The legislation gives government too big a role in the health care system	80	13	6	1
c. The legislation doesn't go far enough in expanding coverage or controlling costs	49	28	19	4
d. Too much of the process took place behind closed doors and involved too much deal-making	73	18	8	1
e. Health care reform is distracting Congress from other priorities, like the economy and jobs	65	23	11	*
f. The legislation takes the wrong approach to reform	72	20	6	2

READ TO ALL: As you may know, health care reform legislation was passed separately by the U.S. House and the Senate in recent months, but the two houses have not been able to agree on one plan to send to the president and so the legislation is currently stalled out in Congress.

5. Does the fact that health reform has run into some delays make you feel (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE), or not? How about (INSERT NEXT ITEM)... do the delays make you feel (INSERT) or not?

	Yes, feel <u>this way</u>	No, do not <u>feel this way</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
a. Anxious	35	63	2
b. Frustrated	53	46	1
c. Angry	33	65	1
d. Pleased	28	69	3
e. Disappointed	54	45	1
f. Relieved	35	62	2

6. Do you think the delays in passing health care reform are more about (Republicans) and (Democrats) having fundamental disagreements on what would be the right policy for the country, or more about both sides playing politics with the issue? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	<u>02/10</u>
More about Republicans and Democrats having disagreements	25
More about both sides playing politics	59
About both politics and fundamental differences (VOL.)	6
Democrats alone playing politics (VOL.)	1
Republicans alone playing politics (VOL.)	3
Neither/something else (VOL.)	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	3

7. What do you think Congress should do now on health care reform: (ROTATE 1-4; 4-1)

	<u>02/10</u>
Move soon to pass the comprehensive legislation that has already been approved by the House and Senate	32
Pull out a few key provisions where there is broad agreement and pass those, even though this won't be comprehensive reform	20
Put health care on hold, so Congress can work on other priorities, and try to deal with it later in the year	22
Stop working on health care this year	19
Other response (i.e. pass either House or Senate bill with specific changes) (VOL.)	4
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	3

8. If a candidate for Congress (INSERT ITEM; ROTATE a AND b) health care reform legislation, would that make you (MORE) likely to vote for him or her, (LESS) likely to vote for him or her, or wouldn't it make much difference in your vote? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

	More likely to vote for <u>him or her</u>	Less likely to vote for <u>him or her</u>	Wouldn't make much <u>difference</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
a. Supported	35	24	37	4
b. Opposed	26	35	36	3

9. For each element of health care reform I name, please tell me how important it is that this be passed into law. First, how important is (INSERT AND RANDOMIZE)? Is that extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or should it not be done at all? Next, how important is (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? READ IF NECESSARY: Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or should it not be done at all?

	Ext. <u>imp.</u>	Very <u>imp.</u>	SW <u>imp.</u>	Not too <u>imp.</u>	Should not be done <u>at all</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
a. Reforming the way health insurance works, for example, so that insurance companies can't deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions, and can't cap the benefits people get over their lifetime	37	39	15	4	3	2
b. Providing tax credits to small businesses to encourage them to offer coverage to their employees	30	42	18	5	4	1
c. Providing financial help to lower and middle income Americans who don't get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	32	36	20	5	6	2
d. Helping 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	35	36	20	3	3	3
e. Expanding the existing Medicaid program to cover more low-income uninsured Americans	26	30	25	7	11	2
f. Allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance plans through age 25	20	33	25	10	11	2

Q9 continued on next page

Q9 continued...

	<u>Ext. imp.</u>	<u>Very imp.</u>	<u>SW imp.</u>	<u>Not too imp.</u>	<u>Should not be done at all</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
g. Creating a health insurance exchange or marketplace where small businesses and people who don't get coverage through their jobs can shop for insurance and compare prices and benefits	30	41	20	5	2	1
h. Limiting future increases in Medicare payments to health care providers as a way to help pay for health reform	18	28	27	8	15	4
i. Limiting the amount of money that patients can collect in medical malpractice lawsuits	26	31	22	9	9	3
j. Allowing health insurers to sell health insurance policies across state lines	22	28	24	13	8	4
k. Expanding high risk insurance pools to cover people who have an illness that makes it hard to buy insurance in the regular market	31	39	21	3	3	2
l. Establishing a new Medicare Commission to recommend policies that reduce cost growth in Medicare	23	32	27	7	8	3

10. You said the following elements of health care reform were extremely important. Which one of these would you say is the MOST important? [READ ITEMS RATED EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN SAME ORDER AS Q9]

NOTE: Asked of those who said two or more elements were "extremely important." Table includes those who said "extremely important" to only one item.

	<u>02/10</u>
Reforming the way health insurance works	11
Providing financial help to lower and middle income Americans to help them purchase coverage	10
Expanding Medicaid to cover more low-income uninsured Americans	8
Helping close the Medicare "doughnut hole" or "coverage gap"	8
Limiting the amount of money that patients can collect in medical malpractice lawsuits	7
Expanding high risk insurance pools to cover people who have an illness that makes it hard to buy insurance in the regular market	6
Providing tax credits to small businesses	5
Allowing health insurers to sell policies across state lines	5
Allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance plans through age 25	4
Creating a health insurance exchange or marketplace	4
Establishing a new Medicare Commission to recommend policies that reduce cost growth in Medicare	3
Limiting future increases in Medicare payments to health care providers	2
None of these/Something else (VOL.)	1
None are extremely important (VOL.)	24
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	2

11. Which would you say comes closest to how you would feel if Congress decides to STOP work on health care reform and doesn't pass a law this year: Would you say you will feel... [ROTATE ORDER 1-4; 4-1]

	<u>02/10</u>
Happy	14
Relieved	24
Disappointed	38
Angry	20
All of these/None of these/Other (VOL.)	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	2

12. If Congress stops working on health care and doesn't pass a law this year, would you be more (angry/disappointed) with the (Republicans) in Congress, the (Democrats) in Congress or both equally? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

Based on those who say they would be disappointed/angry if Congress stops work on health care reform and doesn't pass a law this year (n=656)

	<u>02/10</u>
Republicans in Congress	26
Democrats in Congress	4
Both Republicans and Democrats equally	68
Angry/disappointed with President Obama (VOL.)	*
None of these/someone else (VOL.)	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	1

Q11/12 Summary Table based on Total

	<u>02/10</u>
Happy	14
Relieved	24
Total Disappointed or Angry	58
With Republicans in Congress	15
With Democrats in Congress	2
With Both Republicans and Democrats equally	39
Angry/disappointed with President Obama (VOL.)	*
None/Someone else/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1
All/none of these/Other (VOL.)	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	2

13. Which would you say comes closest to how you would feel if Congress PASSES a final version of the health care reform bills that have already passed the House and Senate. Would you say you will feel... [ROTATE ORDER 1-4; 4-1]

	<u>02/10</u>
Happy	25
Relieved	29
Disappointed	20
Angry	18
All of these/None of these/Other (VOL.)	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	5

14. If Congress passes a final version of the bills that have already passed the House and Senate, would you be more (angry/disappointed) with the (Republicans) in Congress, the (Democrats) in Congress or both equally? (ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES)

Based on those who say they would be disappointed/angry if Congress passes a final version of the health care reform bills that have already passed the House and Senate (n=504)

	<u>02/10</u>
Republicans in Congress	6
Democrats in Congress	33
Both Republicans and Democrats equally	60
Angry/disappointed with President Obama (VOL.)	*
None of these/someone else (VOL.)	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	1

Q13/14 Summary Table based on Total

	<u>02/10</u>
Happy	25
Relieved	29
Total Disappointed or Angry	38
With Republicans in Congress	2
With Democrats in Congress	12
With Both Republicans and Democrats equally	23
Angry/disappointed with President Obama (VOL.)	*
None/Someone else/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1
All/none of these/Other (VOL.)	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	5

(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	49
Female	51

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

Excellent	23
Very good	33
Good	27
Only fair	13
Poor	3
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	9
Full-time for an employer	41
Part-time for an employer	11
Retired	21
Not employed	12
Homemaker (VOL.)	2
Student (VOL.)	2
Disabled (VOL.)	2
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=1,010)

Plan through your/your spouse's employer	57
Plan you purchased yourself	11
Medicare	20
Medicaid/Medi-CAL	4
Some other government program	5
Somewhere else	3
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	36
50-64	26
65 and older	18
Undesignated	*

D7. Are you currently married, living with a partner, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

Married	57
Living with a partner	7
Widowed	6
Divorced	6
Separated	3
Never been married	20
Don't know/Refused	1

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

Republican	24
Democratic	33
Independent	35
Or What? (<i>Other</i> and <i>None</i> included here)	4
Don't know/Refused	4

D9. Would you say your views in most political matters are liberal, moderate or conservative?

Liberal	20
Moderate	39
Conservative	36
Don't know/Refused	4

D10. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?

D10a. How often would you say you vote in presidential elections...always, nearly always, part of the time, or seldom?

	<u>02/10</u>	<u>04/08</u>
Yes, registered	83	82
Always vote in presidential elections	66	65
Nearly always vote in presidential elections	10	9
Vote part of the time in presidential elections	5	3
Seldom vote in presidential elections	2	3
Never vote/Other/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	2
Not registered	17	17
Don't know/Refused	1	1

D10. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?

D10b. How often would you say you vote in mid-term elections, when there is an election for Congress but not for president...always, nearly always, part of the time, or seldom?

Yes, registered	83
Always vote in mid-term elections	43
Nearly always vote in mid-term elections	15
Vote part of the time in mid-term elections	7
Seldom vote in mid-term elections	8
Never vote/Other/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1
No answer	8
Not registered	17
Don't know/Refused	1

- D10. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?
- D11. In national elections, would you say you...always vote (Democratic/Republican), mostly vote Democratic/Republican,) vote for Republicans and Democrats about equally, mostly vote (Republican/Democratic), or always vote (Republican/Democratic)? [ROTATE OPTIONS IN PARENTHESES]

Yes, registered	83
Always vote Democratic	15
Mostly vote Democratic	13
Vote for Democrats and Republicans about equally	20
Mostly vote Republican	15
Always vote Republican	8
Never vote/Other/Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4
No answer	8
Not registered	17
Don't know/Refused	1

- D12. 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)	30
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	1

- D13. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

- D14. 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	30
Black or African-American	11
Hispanic	13
Asian	3
Other mixed race	2
Undesignated	2

D15. 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	15
\$20,000 to less than \$30,000	12
\$30,000 to less than \$40,000	13
\$40,000 to less than \$50,000	11
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	14
\$75,000 to less than \$90,000	8
\$90,000 to less than \$100,000	2
\$100,000 or more	12
(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	14

Trend Information:

- 01/10: Kaiser Family Foundation *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* (January 7-12, 2010)
- 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)



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The Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit private operating foundation, based in Menlo Park, California, dedicated to producing and communicating the best possible analysis and information on health issues.