



**BENENSON STRATEGY GROUP**  
 530 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 203  
 Santa Monica, CA 90401  
 TEL 310 775 2601



**PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES**

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Joel Benenson and Amy Levin, Benenson Strategy Group  
 Gene Ulm, Public Opinion Strategies

**RE:** Cuts To Medi-Cal Program

**DATE:** May 30, 2013

- **Our recent poll shows an overwhelming majority (62%) of 2014 likely voters in California oppose Governor Brown’s cuts to Medi-Cal provider payments.**
  - ✓ Just 29% of voters support the cuts, and only 10% strongly.
  - ✓ Moreover, opposition to the cuts crosses all parties, major demographics, and geography.
  - ✓ Even 60% of those favorable to Governor Brown oppose his decision.

*In 2011, the State Legislature passed Governor Brown's proposal to cut payments to Medi-Cal providers, like doctors and hospitals, by 10%, or \$1 billion. Do you strongly support these cuts to Medi-Cal provider payments, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the cuts to Medi-Cal provider payments?*

- Of the several dozen different demographic groups tested in this survey, not one supports the Medi-Cal cuts. There is little difference between the North and the South, Anglos or Hispanics. Even the wealthiest Californians oppose the Medi-Cal cuts.

<i>% oppose Medi-Cal cuts</i>		
Party Reg	Democrat	66%
	DTS/Other	58%
	Republican	58%
Gender	Men	58%
	Women	65%
Age	<65	62%
	65+	61%
Race	White	62%
	Hispanic	62%
Health Care Coverage	Medi-Cal	78%
	Not Medi-Cal	61%
Income	<\$30K	74%
	\$30K-\$75K	63%
	\$75K+	56%

<i>% oppose Medi-Cal cuts (continued)</i>		
Region	Bay Area	61%
	Southern California	61%
	LA County	58%
	Rest of State	63%

➤ This intense opposition can be explained by a number of underlying attitudes and values of voters:

**1) Voters believe Medi-Cal is critically important compared to other government spending priorities.**

- ✓ Nearly 9 in 10 likely voters say Medi-Cal is important (58% say it is very important) compared to other government programs.
- ✓ 95% of registered Democrats, 90% of those registered as Decline to State or other, and 78% of registered Republicans say Medi-Cal is important compared to other government programs.

**2) They believe the provider cuts will do a great deal of harm to seniors and low-income workers, with little upside for the budget.**

- ✓ 77% think the cuts will hurt the quality and availability of health care in the Medi-Cal program a great deal or some, compared to just 45% who think it will save money or improve the budget situation a great deal or some.
- ✓ Underscoring the difference in intensity on each side, 42% think it will hurt people a great deal, while a meager 8% think it will help the budget a great deal.

**3) For voters, the potential harm isn't abstract, it's personal,** with a majority (53%) saying it is somewhat likely or very likely that they or someone in their immediate family may need Medi-Cal coverage at some point.

➤ Given all this, it is not surprising that messaging does nothing to build support. After both sides of the issue are given equal airtime, still 61% oppose the Medi-Cal cuts and only 35% support them.

###

*The Benenson Strategy Group and Public Opinion Strategies conducted 1,000 interviews in California with registered voters who are likely to vote in the 2014 General Election. All interviews were conducted by telephone between May 21-23, 2013, using a sample of registered voters. The total data set has a margin of error of ±3.1% at the 95% confidence level.*