

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: JARRETT LEWIS, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES / MARGIE OMEMO, GBAO
DATE: JULY 17, 2019
SUBJECT: SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLS NATIONAL SURVEY KEY DATA

METHODOLOGY

On behalf of Physicians for Fair Coverage (PFC), Public Opinion Strategies and GBAO conducted a national online survey of 1,031 registered voters, July 6-10, 2019. Results from the survey have a confidence interval of plus or minus 3.48 percentage points.

KEY POINTS

Voters across the country like, trust and support physicians and believe they have patients' best interests at heart. Conversely, voters do not trust health insurance companies, feel squeezed by them, and blame them for rising health care costs.

- Nearly 90% of voters across America have a favorable image of doctors, while only 44% have a favorable image of health insurance companies. Over half (53%) have an unfavorable view of health insurance companies.
- When presented with a list of different parties, a decisive majority (63%) say doctors care the most about the needs of patients. Health insurance companies are at the very bottom of the list at 2%.
- A plurality of voters (46%) across America believe health insurance costs are the biggest driver of rising health care costs and a majority believe the federal government's highest priority should be bringing down the cost of health insurance.
- More than 80% of voters worry about affording health insurance coverage.
- Among those with private health insurance coverage, nearly all (89%) say they are paying more for that coverage every year. But, rising premiums are not stemming out-of-pocket costs – fully 80% say they are spending more on out-of-pocket costs than they used to.
- Nearly 9 in 10 voters believe health insurers should be required to spend more of what they make in premiums on actual medical care.

Americans are aware of and are worried about surprise medical bills. They blame insurance companies, not doctors for them. They also believe insurers should bear responsibility for surprise bills.

- More than two-thirds of voters have heard about the issue of surprise medical bills. More than 75% of those who have heard about this issue have a less favorable view of health insurance companies because of it.
- 85% of voters worry about receiving an unexpected medical bill.
- 20% have received a surprise out-of-network medical bill in the last few years.
- More than 60% of voters blame health insurance companies for cases of surprise medical bills, while 7% blame doctors.
- More than 70% of voters across the country believe health insurers should be the ones to pay for the costs of surprise medical bills.

Voters are concerned about the access they have to doctors and hospitals and worry that access could be restricted further in the future. Any policy that restricts patient access or pushes doctors away from providing care 24/7 will not be received well.

- More than two-thirds of voters worry about having reliable access to good doctors and hospitals.
- 45% of voters with private health insurance coverage say they have access to fewer doctors and hospitals than they used to.
- More than 70% of voters believe either health insurers or the federal government should be most responsible for increasing patient access to medical care.
- Voters strongly support protecting patient access to care, as more than 85% believe Emergency Rooms should be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, regardless of the cost to do so. And, nearly 90% of voters believe doctors who work in hospitals should be ready to treat any patient regardless of the patient's ability to pay.

Voters trust doctors over insurance companies when it comes to building a fair compensation process. And they overwhelmingly support the Independent Dispute Resolution solution over government rate setting.

- More than 9 in 10 voters believe doctors should be fairly compensated for the care they provide.
- More than three-quarters of voters believe elected officials should support the interests of health care providers over the interests of health insurers (10%).
- 74% of voters believe doctors should be the ones to develop a system for how they are paid rather than health insurers. And, in cases of payment disputes, more than 70% of voters support an independent third-party resolving the dispute rather than the federal government.
- In cases where there is a surprise medical bill, 85% of voters across America believe an independent third-party should determine the payment.