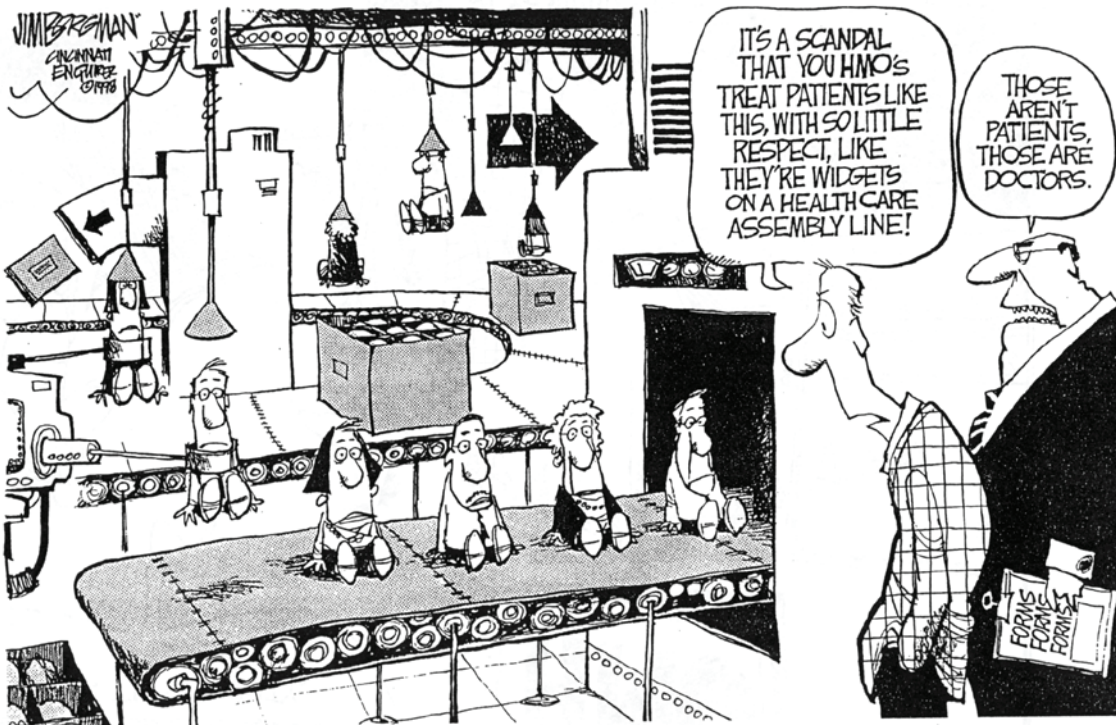


Public support for single payer,
“Medicare for all”

Talking Point 18

A majority of physicians (59 percent), and an even higher proportion of Americans (two-thirds), support national health insurance or “Medicare for all.”



CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS

Support for National Health Insurance among U.S. Physicians: 5 Years Later

Background: The increasing costs of health care and health insurance have concerned Americans for some time (1). The number of uninsured Americans increased by 2.2 million to 47 million in the most recent census. This is the largest increase reported by the U.S. Census Bureau since 1992 (2). In a 2002 survey of physicians, we reported that 49% supported government legislation to establish national health insurance (3).

Objective: To determine whether physician opinion has changed in the 5 years since the 2002 survey and assess physicians' support for government legislation to establish national health insurance and their support for achieving universal coverage through more incremental reform.

Methods: We randomly sampled 5000 physicians from the American Medical Association Masterfile. We sent each physician a survey asking 2 questions: 1) In principle, do you support or oppose government legislation to establish national health insurance? and 2) do you support achieving universal coverage through more incremental reform? Question 1 was identical to the one we used in our 2002 study (3). Respondents answered using a 5-point Likert scale. We also gathered data on physician membership organizations and demographic, personal, and practice characteristics.

Results: Of 5000 mailed surveys, 509 were returned as undeliverable and 197 were returned by physicians who were no longer practicing. We received 2193 surveys from the 4294 eligible participants, for a response rate of 51%. Respondents did not differ significantly from nonrespondents in sex, age, doctoral degree type, or specialty. A total of 59% supported legislation to establish national health insurance (28% "strongly" and 31% "generally" supported), 9% were neutral on the topic, and 32% opposed it (17% "strongly" and 15% "generally" opposed). A total of 55% supported achieving universal coverage through more incremental reform (14% "strongly" and 41% "generally" supported), 21% were neutral on the topic, and 25% opposed incremental reform (14% "strongly" and 10% "generally" opposed). A total of 14% of physicians were opposed to national health insurance but supported more incremental reforms. More than one half of the respondents from every medical specialty supported national health insurance legislation, with the exception of respondents in surgical subspecialties, anesthesiologists, and radiologists. Current overall support (59%) increased by 10 percentage points since 2002 (49%). Support increased in every subspecialty since 2002, with the exception of pediatric subspecialists, who were highly supportive in both surveys (Figure).

Conclusion: Most physicians in the United States support government legislation to establish national health insurance. Support is high among physicians in all but some of the procedural specialties.

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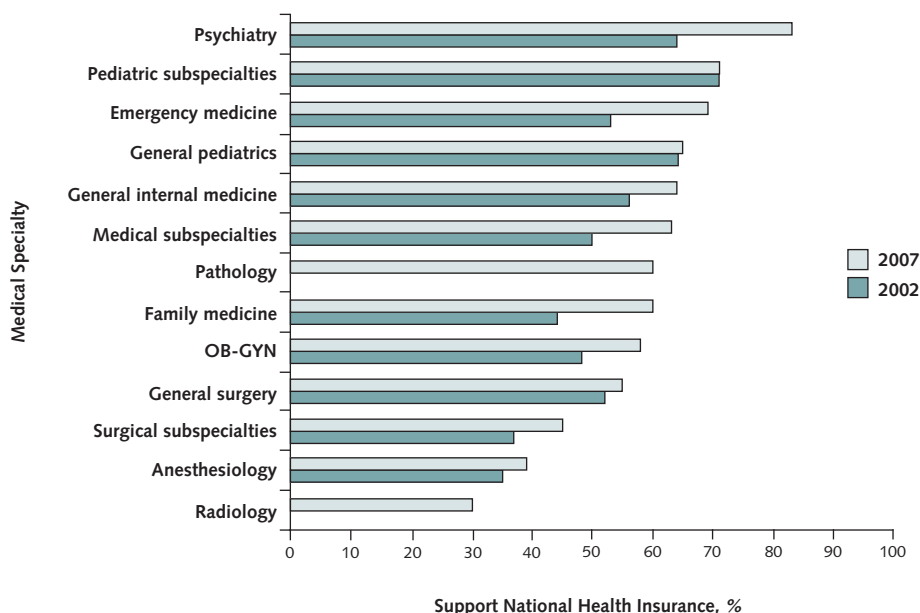
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Figure. Support for government legislation to establish National Health Insurance in 2007 and 2002, by specialty.



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2002 data are not available for pathology and radiology because of lack of response in those categories. OB-GYN = obstetrics and gynecology.

PNHP Backgrounder: Recent Public Polls on Single Payer

AP/Yahoo (December 14-20, 2007)

1,821 adults

Which comes closest to your view?

34% - The United States should continue the current health insurance system in which most people get their health insurance from private employers, but some people have no insurance

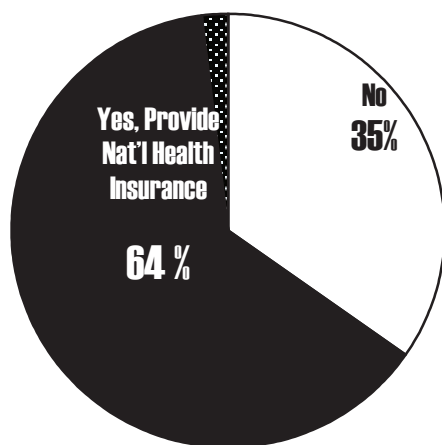
65% - The United States should adopt a universal health insurance program in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers

2% - Refused / Not Answered

CNN / Opinion Research (May 4-6, 2007)

1,028 American Adults

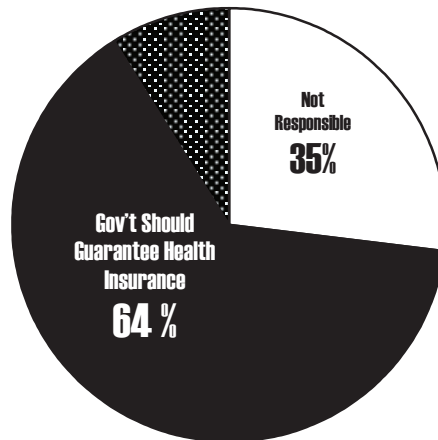
“Do you think the government should provide a national health insurance program for all Americans, even if this would require higher taxes?”



New York Times / CBS News (March 1, 2007)

1,281 American Adults

“Do you think the federal government should guarantee health insurance for all Americans, or isn’t this the responsibility of the federal government?”



Harvard School of Public Health/Harris Interactive (February 14, 2008)

2,038 Adults

“So far as you understand the phrase, do you think that if we had socialized medicine in this country that the health care system would be better or worse than what we have now?”

45% - “Better”

39% - “Worse”

(Historically, the phrase “socialized medicine” has been used to attack health reform proposals in the U.S.)



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Endorsers of Single-Payer National Health Insurance

Medical Organizations

American Association of Community Psychiatrists
 American Medical Student Association (national and chapters)
 American Medical Women's Association
 American Nurses Association
 American Public Health Association
 CA Health Professional Student Alliance
 California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee
 Falls City Medical Society, Kentucky
 Health Care for All Texas
 Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.
 Kentucky Psychiatric Medical Association
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Health Care for the Homeless Council
 National Medical Association
 New Mexico Network of Health Professionals for a National Health Program

Puerto Rican College of Physicians and Surgeons

Faith Organizations

Assembly of the Urban Caucus of the Episcopal Church
 Church Women United
 General Board on Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church
 Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Social Justice and Ministry Committee of Saint John the Baptist Parish, Collegeville, MN
 Unitarian Universalists Association of Congregations

State Governments

Kentucky House of Representatives
 Maine House of Representatives and Maine Senate
 New Hampshire House of Representatives
 New York State Assembly and New York Senate

Local Governments

Alachua County Commissioners, Gainesville, FL
 Albany County, NY
 Albany, NY
 Allegheny County, PA
 Ambridge, PA
 Arcata, CA
 Austin, TX
 Baltimore, MD
 Beaver County Commissioners, Western PA
 Bellingham, WA
 Bergen County Board of Freeholders, NJ
 Bergen County New Jersey Chosen Freeholders
 Bloomington, IN
 Boston, MA
 Boyle County, KY
 Camden, NJ City Council
 Chicago, IL
 Cortland County Legislature, NY

Cortland, NY
 Corvallis, OR
 Detroit, MI
 Erie, PA
 Flint, MI
 Gainesville, FL
 Hamtramck, MI
 Hancock County Democratic Committee, ME
 Hoboken, NJ
 Hudson County Board of Freeholders, NJ
 Indianapolis, IN
 Ithaca, NY
 Leon County Democratic Executive Committee, FL
 Livingston County, NY
 Lorain County, OH
 Lorain, OH
 Louisville, KY
 Marion County, IN
 Morehead, KY

Morgantown, WV
 New Albany, IN
 Oberlin, OH
 Philadelphia, PA
 Pittsburgh, PA
 Rensselaer County, NY
 San Francisco, CA
 Santa Cruz County, CA
 Santa Cruz, CA
 Schuyler County, NY
 St. Lucie County, FL
 The City of Englewood, NJ
 Tompkins County, NY
 Troy, NY
 Tuskegee, AL
 Ulster County, NY
 University City, MO
 Warren County, TN
 West Hollywood, CA
 Wilksburg, PA
 Wilmington, DE

Civic/Community Organizations

Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA), Cape May County, NJ Chapter #01042
American Library Association
Americans for Democratic Action
Amnesty International
City of Richmond Commission on Aging
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers Union
Human Rights Justice Forum
League of Women Voters
Midcoast Health Care Reform (South Thomaston, Maine)
National Council of Senior Citizens
National Family Farm Coalition
Our Bodies, Ourselves
OWL
Patriots for Change (Chagrin Falls, OH)
Peace, Living Wage, Universal Health Care Coalition (Wilmington, DE)

The U.S. Conference of Mayors
US Public Interest Research Group
Women’s Community Cancer Project (Cambridge, MA)

Political Organizations

Butte-Silver Bow County Democratic Central Committee, MT
Chester County Pennsylvania Democratic Committee
Colorado Democratic Party
Democratic Party of Milwaukee County
Meyerland Area Democratic Club , Houston, TX
Progressive Democrats of America
Single-Payer Action Network (SPAN), Ohio
Skagit County Democratic Party
U.S. Green Party
West University Area Democrats, Houston, TX
Woolwich, Maine Democratic Committee

Labor Organizations

State AFL-CIOs:
Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida

Georgia
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Maine
Maryland-D.C.
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri

Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Carolina

South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Vermont
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming