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Many Americans Still Confused About New Healthcare Reform Law and Its Provisions

Lack of understanding linked to rhetoric that preceded the final vote in March, and the complicated nature of existing health-care system

NORWALK, Connecticut, USA (July 29, 2010) – Not sure what’s in—and not in—the new healthcare legislation signed into law by President Barack Obama in March? You're not alone. More than 2,100 adults were given a list of 18 reform items and asked to identify what’s included and what's not included in the law. Only four items were correctly identified by the majority of those polled.

Most (58 percent) know that the reform package will prohibit insurers from denying coverage to people because they are already sick; 55 percent know the law permits children to stay on their parents' insurance plan until age 26; and 52 percent realize that people who don't have insurance will be subject to financial penalties. Additionally, half are aware that employers with more than 50 employees will have to offer their workers affordable insurance.

These are some of the major findings of today’s HealthDay/Harris Poll, conducted between July 15 to 19, 2010 among 2,104 adults (aged 18 and over).

Among other findings: 82 percent think the bill will result in rationing of health care or that it might (it won't); 79 percent don't know or aren't sure if drug companies will pay an annual fee, (they will); 73 percent don't know the law establishes a new tax on the sale of medical devices; 66 percent don't know or aren't sure if the legislation will result in insurance exchanges where people can shop for insurance, (it will); and 63 percent either aren't sure or don't know if the new law will increase the number of people eligible for Medicaid, (it will).

"The problem for the (Obama) administration is healthcare reform is fiendishly complicated because the healthcare system is fiendishly complicated, and it is not politically feasible to tear up the system and build it again," said Humphrey Taylor, chairman of the Harris Poll, Harris Interactive’s long-running public opinion poll. "Instead you have to build on the system that you have. When you try to build on a fiendishly complicated system, you have fiendishly complicated reforms."

Another cause of the confusion is due to the long and heated political debate that surrounded the bill before it was passed, Taylor said.

"The level of ignorance and misinformation is sort of astounding," he said. "It seems people are still reacting to the rhetoric, not the substance of what is in the bill, because they don't actually know what is or is not in the actual legislation."

For more information, click [here](#) to read the full report and methodology. HealthDay's news report is available [here](#). Full data on the poll and its methodology are available at [Harris Interactive](#).

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TABLE 1**KNOWLEDGE OF ITEMS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN REFORM BILL (PPACA)**

“Please indicate if you believe each of the following is included (or will result from) or is not included (or will not result from the health care reform bill that was signed by President Obama in March of this year. If you don’t know, please do not guess but check “Not sure.”

Base: All adults

		Is Included/ Will Result From	Is Not Included/ Will Not Result From	Not Sure
Not allowing insurers to deny coverage to people because they are sick	%	58	9	34
Allowing children to stay on their parents’ insurance until they are 26 years old	%	55	9	35
Financial penalties for all individuals who do not have or do not buy insurance	%	52	9	39
All employers with more than 50 employees must offer their employees affordable insurance	%	50	9	41
Tax credits for small business to provide insurance to their employees	%	43	14	43
Increasing the number of people who are eligible for Medicaid	%	37	13	50
Insurance exchanges where people can shop for insurance	%	35	14	52
A new tax on the sale of medical devices	%	27	13	60
An annual fee to be paid by drug companies	%	21	14	65

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 2**BELIEF THAT ITEMS NOT IN REFORM BILL (PPACA) ARE INCLUDED**

“Please indicate if you believe each of the following is included (or will result from) or is not included (or will not result from the health care reform bill that was signed by President Obama in March of this year. If you don’t know, please do not guess but check “Not sure.”

Base: All adults

		Is Included/ Will Result From	Is Not Included/ Will Not Result From	Not Sure
An increase in the federal government’s budget deficit	%	45	13	42
Higher income taxes for the middle class	%	37	22	41
All Americans will have health insurance	%	36	29	35
New ways to ration health care	%	36	18	46
A new government run health plan to compete with private insurance plans	%	36	22	43
A cut in Medicare benefits	%	33	21	45
Higher tax deductions from workers’ pay	%	33	16	50
Panels to decide what care very sick, older people should receive	%	30	26	44
Illegal aliens will have health insurance	%	28	27	45

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States July 15 to 19, 2010 among 2,104 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

Full data available at www.harrisinteractive.com

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These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

About HealthDay

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About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including health care, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in more than 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients - stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

