

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: JARRETT LEWIS & ROBERT BLIZZARD
DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2020
RE: TARGET STATE SURVEY FINDINGS – SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLS



On behalf of Taxpayers Protection Alliance, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a survey September 4-10, 2020 among N=800 registered voters in Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan and Montana. Results from the survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.46 percentage points.

BOTTOM LINE

Voters in these six key senate battleground states recognize how vital health care providers are to our society. Regardless of political affiliation, these voters hold doctors and other healthcare providers in extremely high regard and a strong majority say their trust in health care providers to look out for their best medical interest has only increased since the coronavirus pandemic began. The same cannot be said for health insurers.

When it comes to the issue of surprise medical billing, it is simple for these voters: three-quarters believe doctors should be the ones setting their payment rates instead of health insurers or the federal government. Further, 74% believe an independent third-party should decide payment disputes between doctors and health insurers instead of the federal government.

The more these voters learn about rate-setting as a “solution” to surprise billing, the less viable it becomes. When these voters learn that rate-setting would result in doctor shortages, hospital closures, especially in rural and other underserved communities, the numbers move sharply away from supporting this policy. Handing health insurers a big win at the expense of health care providers is something these voters in these key battleground states simply will not support.

KEY FINDINGS

Voters in these states have an incredibly positive view of health care providers. That support drops when it comes to health insurers.

- Voters have a very favorable image of nurses (97%), doctors (92%) and hospitals (82%). Just 49% say the same about health insurers. The strong sentiment towards health care providers is a bipartisan one, as more than three-quarters of Democrats, Independents and Republicans have a favorable image of all three provider groups.
- The coronavirus pandemic has elevated trust in health care providers among these voters. When asked whether the pandemic has increased or decreased trust to look out for their best medical interests (or the medical interest of their families), 86% of these voters say their trust in nurses has increased, 78% say their trust in doctors has increased and 65% say their trust in hospitals has increased.

Just 32% of these voters say the coronavirus pandemic has led to an increased trust in health insurers to look out for their best medical interests (48% say the coronavirus has decreased their trust in health insurers).

- More than 9-in-10 voters across these states agree that the coronavirus pandemic has shown how *valuable* and *critical* doctors and nurses are to our society. The recognition of the vital role health care providers has in our society is bipartisan, as more than 85% of Democrats, Independents and Republicans agree.
- A decisive majority of these voters (79%) believe doctors care the most about the needs of patients compared to others in the industry. Just 1% believe health insurers care most about the needs of patients.
- Fully 85% of these voters believe that health insurers put profits over the medical concerns and needs of their customers, a sentiment shared by Democrats (93%), Independents (86%) and Republicans (78%).

These voters clearly support the interests of health care providers over health insurers.

- Fully 97% of these voters believe doctors should be fairly compensated for the medical care they provide, including 69% who strongly feel that way.
- Further, 91% of voters across these states believe elected officials should support the interests of health care providers over the interests of health insurers, including 96% of Democrats, 91% of Independents and 86% of Republicans.

There is a strong sentiment that doctors should decide a fair compensation process rather than insurers. In addition, voters overwhelmingly support an independent third-party over the federal government to settle payment disputes between health care providers and health insurers.

- Fully 75% of these voters believe doctors should be the ones to come up with a fair amount that health insurers pay doctors for the medical care they provide.
- And, in cases of payment disputes, 74% of these voters support an independent third-party resolving the payment dispute rather than the federal government.

Finally, voters have very serious concerns about the drawbacks of the benchmark plan.

- Fully 81% of these voters are less likely to support the benchmark plan once they learn it would lead to more narrow networks and reduced patient access to quality care, including 82% of Democrats, 80% of Independents and 80% of Republicans. Further, 82% of voters in urban areas across these states and 76% of voters in rural areas across these states would be less likely to support this plan once they learn of the resulting reduction in access.
- More than 7-in-10 (72%) of these voters are less likely to support the benchmark plan once they learn it would lead to more rural hospitals closing and an increase in rural doctor shortage.
- Nearly 6-in-10 of these voters (58%) are less likely to support the benchmark plan once they learn it is a step in the direction of a single payer health care plan, including 83% of strong Republicans.