

2007 Health Confidence Survey

Fact Sheet 2: Policy Changes

Policymakers are currently discussing and considering a number of proposals for how to increase the number of insured Americans and better control the cost of health care. The 2007 Health Confidence Survey gages reactions to some of the core ideas behind these proposals.

Extending Coverage

- Two-thirds of Americans age 21 and older say they would pay 1 percent more in federal income taxes to ensure everyone has health insurance (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Percentage Willing to Pay More in Federal Income Taxes for Universal Health Insurance

Would pay 1% more	68%
Would pay 3% more	39
Would pay 5% more	22

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.

However, many are not confident about government’s ability to provide quality health care coverage to all those who need it. Americans are less likely to lack confidence in the ability of employers to provide quality coverage (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Confidence in Ability to Provide Quality Health Care Coverage

	Extremely Confident	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not too Confident	Not at all Confident
The federal government to provide coverage for all citizens	12%	14%	31%	19%	23%
The state government to provide coverage for all residents	9	11	34	21	24
Employers to provide for all workers	9	17	48	16	8

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.

- Many feel that even smaller employers should be required to provide and contribute to health insurance for their workers (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Sizes of Employers That Should Be Required to Provide Health Insurance Plans

All employers, regardless of size	42%
Employers with 30 or more workers	18
Employers with 50 or more workers	12
Employers with 100 or more workers	10
Employers with 1,000 or more workers	5
No employers	9
Don’t know/Refused	5

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.

Tax Treatment of Health Care Expenses

- More than half believe that all health care expenses should be tax deductible (Figure 4).

Figure 4
Deduction of Health Care Expenses

People should be able to deduct all of their health care expenses	54%
People should only be able to deduct health care costs that exceed a certain percentage of their income	36
No one should be able to deduct health care costs	5
Don't know/Refused	5

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.

- A majority think giving larger tax breaks for health care expenses to people with lower income is fairer than having the same breaks for everyone (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Application of Tax Breaks

The rules should take income into consideration, with larger tax breaks for those with lower income	61%
The rules should be the same for everyone, no matter what their household income	36
Don't know/Refused	4

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.

- Most with employer-provided coverage would prefer to continue receiving their current level of benefits, even if they had to pay income tax on part of the premium (Figure 6).

Figure 6
**Preference for Continuation of Benefits if Part of Premium Were Taxed,
Among Those with Employer-Provided Coverage**

If Congress were to pass a law so that the total amount of premium that could be excluded from taxes is set at \$7,500, would you prefer to:	
Continue receiving your current level of health benefits from your employer, and pay any taxes incurred on the premium	62%
Reduce the level of health benefits you receive from your employer, and pay no tax on the premium	27
Don't know/Refused	10

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2007 Health Confidence Survey.