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Change Medicare Eligibility Age? Public Is Skeptical

WASHINGTON—Medicare, the federal health care insurance program for the elderly and disabled, is facing a financial shortfall that some policymakers suggest could be solved in part by delaying the age at which Americans become eligible for full benefits.

One such proposal would delay the eligibility age for *full* Medicare benefits to 68 (it is currently 65), while at the same time lowering the age for partial benefits to 62—although the level of benefits would be permanently reduced.

What does the public think about that idea?

Not much, according to the 2010 Health Confidence Survey, recently released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Mathew Greenwald & Associates. The results:

- 8 percent strongly favor the plan.
- 19 percent somewhat favor it.
- 1 percent are indifferent.
- 28 percent somewhat oppose it.
- 42 percent strongly oppose it.

Support for Raising Medicare Eligibility Age to 68 for Full Benefits and Lowering the Eligibility Age for Partial Benefits to 62*

Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Neither Favor/or Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Depends/ Don't Know
8%	19%	1%	28%	42%	3%

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, 2010 Health Confidence Survey.

* Numbers do not add to 100 because of rounding.

Full results of the 2010 Health Confidence Survey are available at EBRI's website at www.ebri.org

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