



**Paul Simon
Public Policy Institute**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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Illinois Voters: Federal Government Should Assure Health Insurance Coverage

CARBONDALE, ILL. - Almost 61 percent of registered Illinois voters believe the federal government has a responsibility to make sure all citizens have health insurance, according to a poll released by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

The survey of 800 registered voters was conducted Sept. 8 to Oct. 8 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

Consistent with national trends, the survey sample confirmed that over 90 percent of respondents had some form of health insurance. Approximately 60 percent reported health coverage through their employers, while the remaining 40 percent participated in public programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, or health programs administered by the Veterans Administration.

Dr. Linda Baker, visiting professor at the Institute, said “with 93 percent of the sample reporting health coverage, it is not surprising some of the attention nationally has been given to how to make the system more efficient and cost effective.

“Comparability of coverage for those 93 percent in areas such as the cost of premiums and plan deductibles, plan coverage, cancellation policies and practices, difficulties with payment avoidance and delays, pre-existing conditions, and similar issues confronting individuals who have insurance merit further examination and discussion,” Baker said.

Baker holds her doctorate in public policy and served as Gov. Jim Edgar’s director of the state Department of Human Services and Department of Employment Security.

Charles Leonard, the Simon Institute visiting professor who supervised the poll, urged analysts to take a guarded approach to interpreting the survey’s health care questions. “First, remember that this was a survey of registered voters, not a survey of all Illinois adults,” Leonard said. “We expect a survey of Illinois citizens in general would show that somewhat less than 90 percent would have health insurance, since voters are somewhat more affluent than the population as a whole.

“Second,” he said, “while six in ten Illinois voters surveyed said they thought the federal government should see to it that all citizens have health insurance, we did not ask them where that insurance should come from, nor the extent to which the government itself ought to be a player in the insurance market.”

Baker added, “The potentially crippling impact of rising costs for health insurance on the private sector, particularly small businesses, continues to be discussed.”

Despite the resistance of some to having government in the health care business, it is clear from the response to the survey that government is already providing health coverage for a solid minority of survey respondents in Illinois, Baker said. “With the escalating costs of Medicare and Medicaid across the states, it is not surprising that a

major issue confronting Congress and the Administration has been how to pay for expanded coverage for more Americans.”

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute created, directed and financed this telephone survey of 800 registered voters across the state of Illinois. Interviews were conducted between September 9, 2009, and October 8, 2009, by the Survey Research Center at the University of North Texas. Respondents were chosen at random, and each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. Results from the entire sample have a statistical margin for error of ± 3.4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we were to conduct the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances the results would vary by no more than plus or minus 3.4 points from the results obtained here. The margin for error will be larger for demographic, geographic, and response subgroups.

The Simon Institute’s non-partisan survey is done to help Illinois policymakers, leaders and academic researchers better understand public opinion on key questions. This is the second year the institute has done the survey.

**Paul Simon Public Policy Institute
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**Poll Results of Registered Voters in Illinois
Conducted September 8-October 9**

Released October 26, 2009

I'm going to read a couple of statements about health insurance. For each one that I read, please tell me if you strongly agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree.

1. First, the federal government has a responsibility to make sure that all citizens have health insurance. Do you:

Strong agree	35.3%
Mostly agree	25.6%
Mostly disagree	15.9%
Strongly disagree	21.3%
No opinion/Don't know	2.0%

2. Do you currently have health insurance?

Yes	92.9%
No	6.9%
Other/No response	.3%

3. If yes, is that...

Through a public program (such as Medicare, Medicaid, VA)?	39.6%
Provided by an employer?	59.8%
Purchased individually?	21.5%

**Percentages add up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.*

**Some columns do not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

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