



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 30, 2012

Gallup: Majority Against Fed. Gov't Guaranteeing Healthcare Coverage

Despite the reelection this month of a president whose primary legislative achievement has been the enactment of a national healthcare program, a majority of Americans now believe it is not the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have healthcare coverage, according to a new Gallup poll. As reported on the [Gallup Politics](#) website, the latest survey is the first since Gallup Trends began asking the question in 2000 that shows a smaller percentage of respondents in favor of the federal government assuring healthcare for all than are opposed to Washington assuming that role. The random telephone poll of 1,015 adults, ages 18 and over in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, was conducted November 15-18, just nine to 12 days after Americans went to the polls and reelected President Obama, who pushed through Congress and signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, a measure designed to ensure that nearly all Americans have healthcare insurance. The legislation is so closely identified with the president that most people know the law by its informal title, ObamaCare.



Whether voters preferred the incumbent to his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, because of or in spite of the president's top legislative achievement is not clear from the Gallup survey, however. For even as a solid majority registered their opposition in principle to the federal role in guaranteeing coverage for all, a slender majority (48 to 45 percent) was in favor of the Affordable Care Act. That may be one reason why Romney, who promised to begin the project of repealing the law on "Day One" of his presidency, did not win over a majority of the voters.

Gallup Trends showed 64 percent in favor of the federal government ensuring healthcare for all in the year 2000, when only 31 percent were opposed. Support for the federal role reached its zenith in 2006, when 69 percent were in favor and 28 percent opposed. Last year's survey showed 50 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed. Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents registered the sharpest drop in support, with 38 percent of that group in favor in 2007 and only 12 percent this year. Support among Democrats and Independents inclined to vote Democratic dropped 10 points, from 81 percent in 2007 to 71 percent in the latest survey.



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While 67 percent view the current healthcare system as either in a state of crisis (16 percent) or having major problems (51 percent), that is a less negative assessment than in prior years, Gallup reports. Similarly the 58 percent who rate healthcare coverage in the United States as fair or poor, versus the 41 percent who consider it excellent or good, is the least negative rating of healthcare coverage since the polling began. The percentage that view coverage positively has been as low as 21 percent.

Americans are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the healthcare itself, though not with its costs. The survey shows 62 percent rating the quality of healthcare in the United States excellent or good, while only 22 percent say they are satisfied with the cost. An overwhelming majority — 77 percent — expressed dissatisfaction with the cost.

“Americans remain broadly dissatisfied with U.S. healthcare costs, and it is unclear at this point whether the healthcare reforms will significantly reduce U.S. healthcare costs once the [ObamaCare] law is fully implemented,” the Gallup report said. The early signs, however, have not been encouraging. Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the libertarian [Cato Institute](#), has observed that it is easier to focus public attention on the promised benefits of the new healthcare program than on its inevitable costs.

“Nor should we forget,” he wrote, “that across the country there are people who are not being hired or, worse, are being laid off, because employers cannot afford the cost of insurance, especially since Obamacare has not only failed to curb rising insurance costs, it has already added 2-3 percent to premium prices. These unemployed workers are more of the unseen victims of Obamacare.” That, said Tanner, provides a lesson that extends beyond even the magnitude of a national healthcare program.

“Politicians often act as though government programs are cost free,” he wrote. “But there are always costs and unexpected consequences. Those costs and consequences may not be as easily seen as the goodies that government distributes, but they are no less real.”



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