

Tracking Public Opinion on Health Care Reform

Liz Hamel
 Assoc. Director, Public Opinion & Survey Research
 Kaiser Family Foundation

PAPOR Annual Conference
 December 11, 2009



CHART 1

A Brief History of Health Reform

Who/When	What	Fate
Harry Truman (1950) LBJ (1965)	Universal Medicare & Medicaid	"a socialist plot" "Nothing in this title shall be construed to authorize any Federal officer or employee to exercise any supervision or control over the practice of medicine..."
Nixon / Ford / Wilbur Mills (1974) Jimmy Carter (1979)	Universal coverage, employer mandate Cost containment	Mills falls in Tidal Basin with Fanny Fox The "Voluntary Effort"
Bill Clinton (1994) 1997	Health Security Act State Children's Health Insurance Program	Scary Plan, Bad Strategy # uninsured children falls
	2003 Medicare Prescription Drug Act	progress and privatization
Barack Obama & the U.S. Congress (2009)	?	?

Average time between major national health reform windows:

19.7 YEARS



CHART 2

Setting the Stage: Actual Problems with Cost



- Over half say they or a member of their household have put off some sort of health care because of the cost in the past year
- One in three say they or a member of their household have had problems paying medical bills over the past year
- That percentage is significantly higher among certain groups, such as the uninsured, those in poor health and those with lower incomes

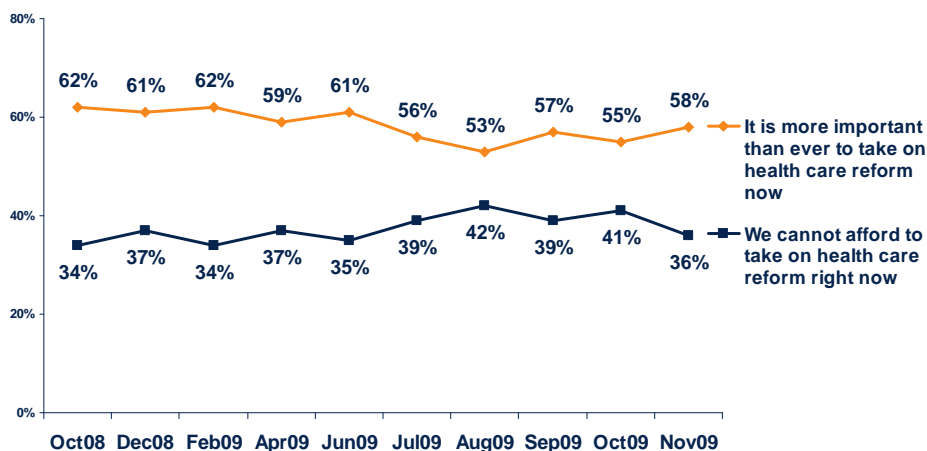
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation September *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted September 11-18, 2009)



CHART 3

Health Care Reform... Is Now the Right Time?

Which comes closer to describing your own views? Given the serious economic problems facing the country...



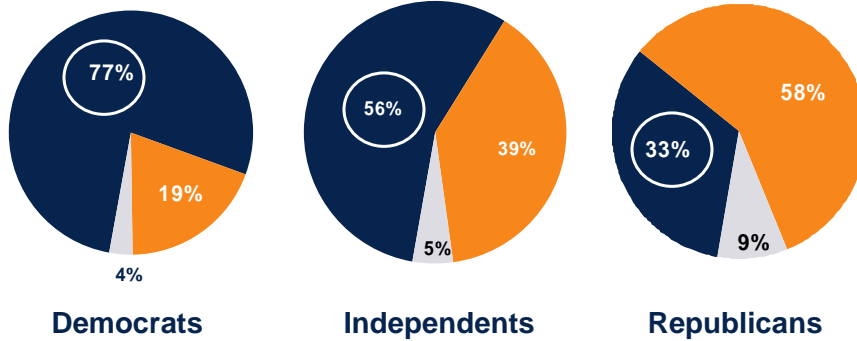
Note: Asked of half sample in Nov09. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation polls



CHART 4

Partisans Disagree

■ It is *more important than ever* to take on health care reform now
 ■ We *cannot afford to* take on health care reform right now



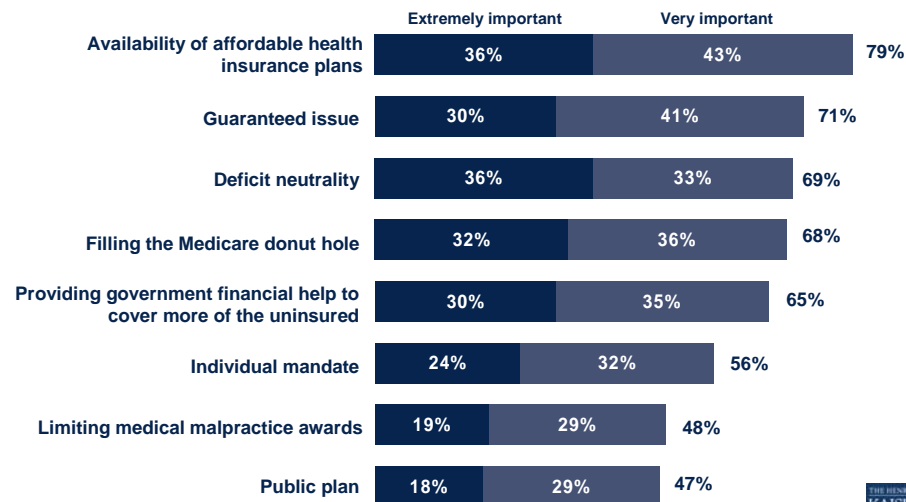
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009) ■ Don't know/Refused



CHART 5

What Americans prioritize in a reform bill

Percent who say it is EXTREMELY or VERY important to them personally that each of the following be a feature of any final reform plan:



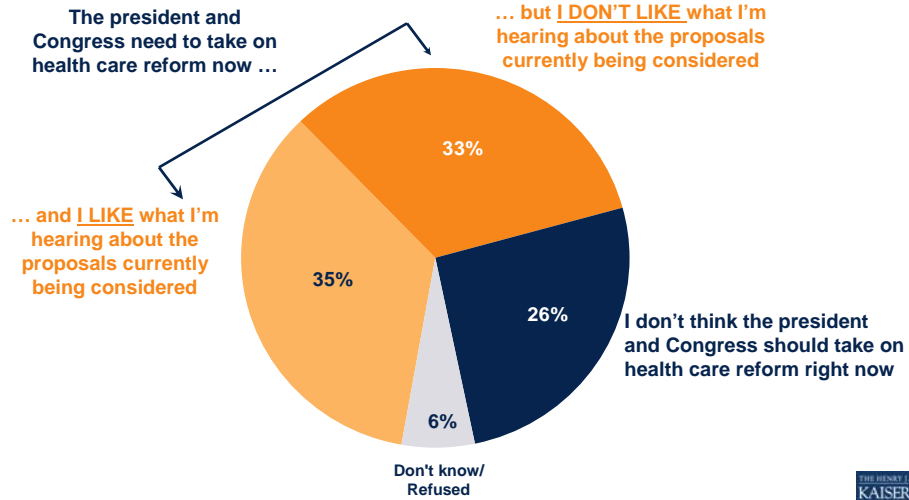
Note: Question wording abbreviated.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)



CHART 6

Devilish details

Which comes closer to describing your views?

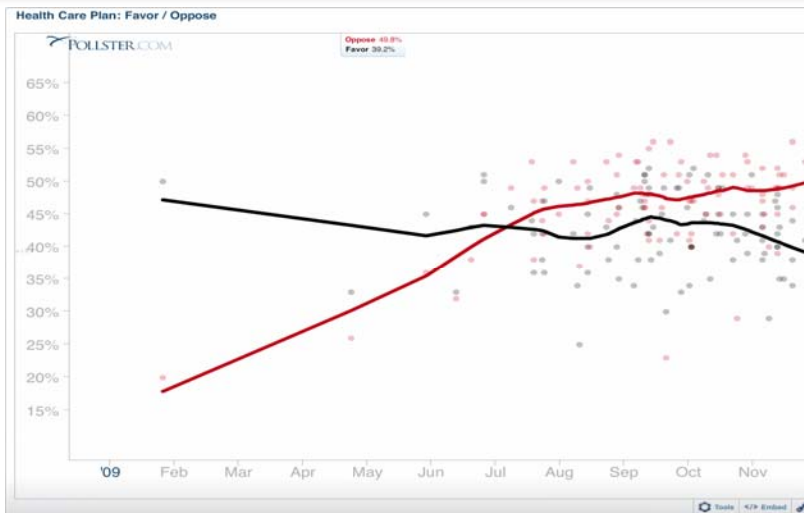


Note: Asked of half sample.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted November 5-12, 2009)



CHART 7

Thumbs up/thumbs down: the aggregator's version



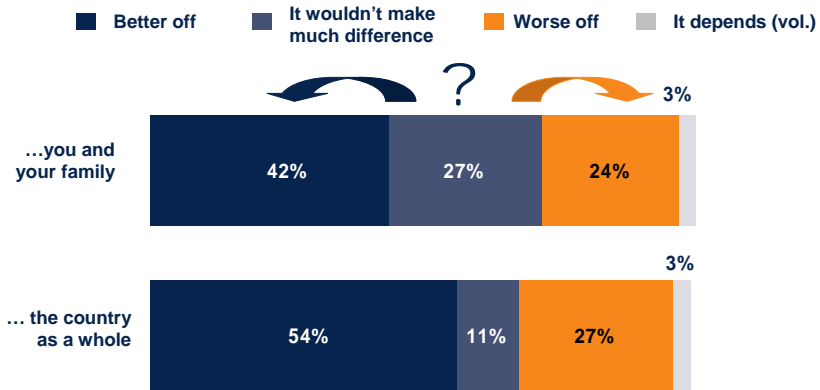
Pollster.com aggregation of support/oppose measures from various surveys accessed 12/1/09. Available at <http://www.pollster.com/polls/us/healthplan.php>



CHART 8

Public's perceptions of personal, national impact

Do you think (you and your family/the country as a whole) would be better off or worse off if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?

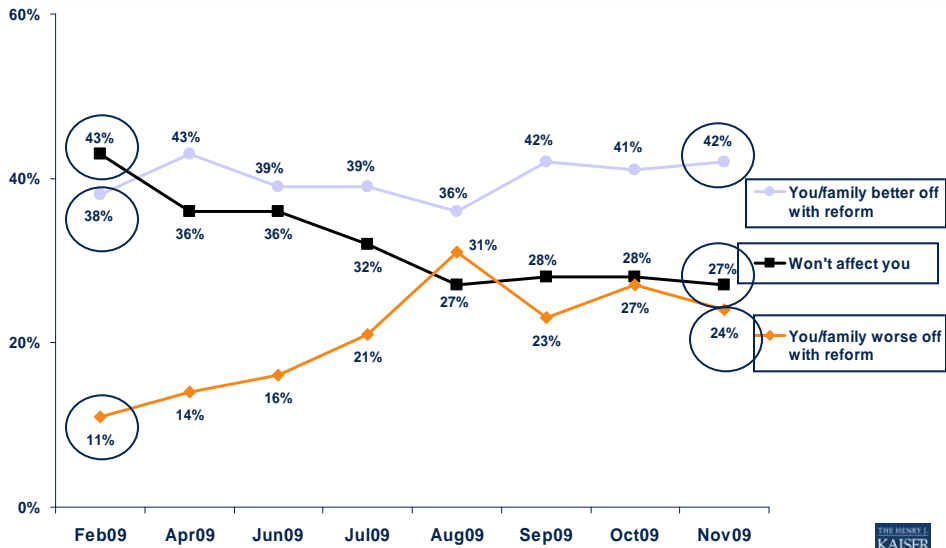


Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)



CHART 9

Views of personal impact



Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking polls*

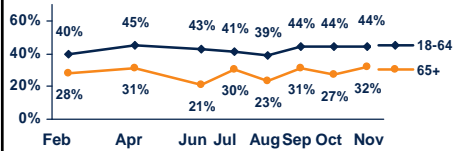


CHART 10

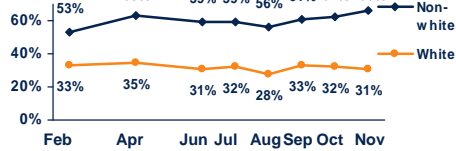
Major differences across demographic groups

% who responded "you and your family would be BETTER off if the president and Congress passed health care reform"

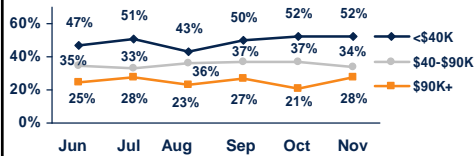
By age



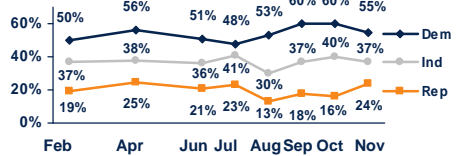
By race/ethnicity



By income



By party identification



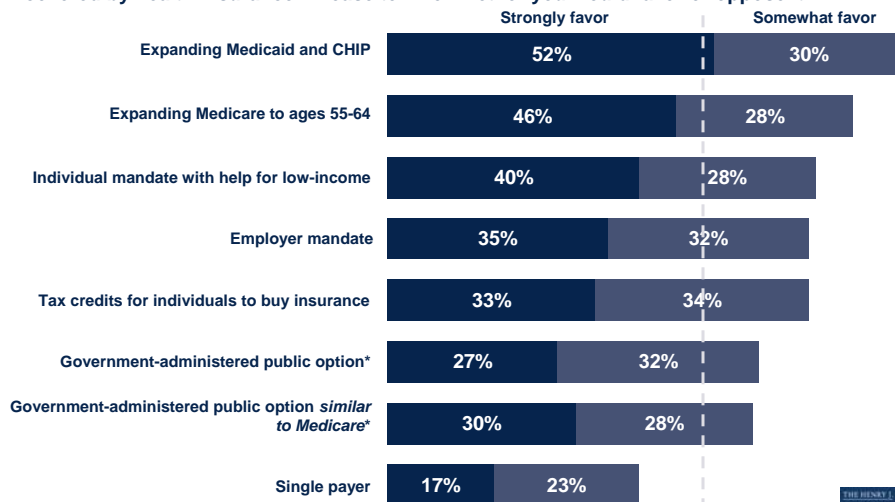
Asked of half sample in Nov09.
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls



CHART 11

Many approaches to coverage expansion popular

Now I'm going to read you some different ways to increase the number of Americans covered by health insurance. Please tell me whether you would favor or oppose it.



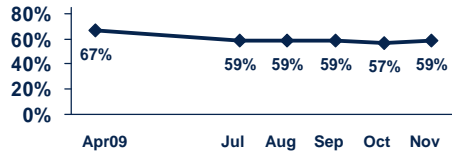
Note: Question wording abbreviated. Items marked with an asterisk (*) asked of separate half samples as a wording experiment.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted September 11-18, 2009)



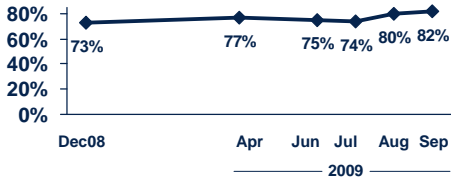
CHART 12

Examples of continuing support

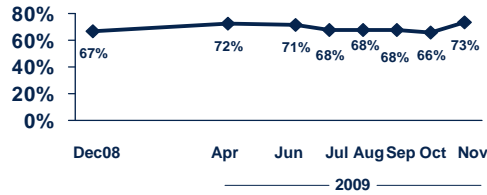
Percent who favor a public option*:



Percent who favor expansion of state programs:



Percent who favor an individual mandate:



* Note wording has changed slightly over time. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys



CHART 13

Opinions on a range of topics malleable (i.e., public plan)

Would you favor or oppose creating a government-administered public health insurance option similar to Medicare to compete with private health insurance plans?



CBQ CHALLENGE:
 What if you heard that a public health insurance option was a fallback that would only kick in if not enough people had affordable health plans available through the private insurance companies?



Note: Follow up questions asked of those who initially opposed. Responses shown on all graphs are based on total; on bottom graphs, "favor" includes those who initially favored and those who favored after hearing the follow up. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted October 8-15, 2009)



CHART 14

One (guaranteed) issue where that trick doesn't work...

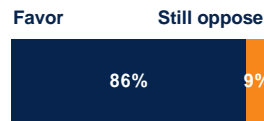
Do you favor or oppose the federal government requiring health insurance companies to cover anyone who applies, even if they have a prior illness?



Supporters were asked: What if you heard this requirement might mean that healthier people would end up paying somewhat more for their health insurance than they do now, while sicker people would pay somewhat less?



Opponents were asked: What if you heard that some people with very expensive illnesses like cancer would have no way of getting insurance otherwise?



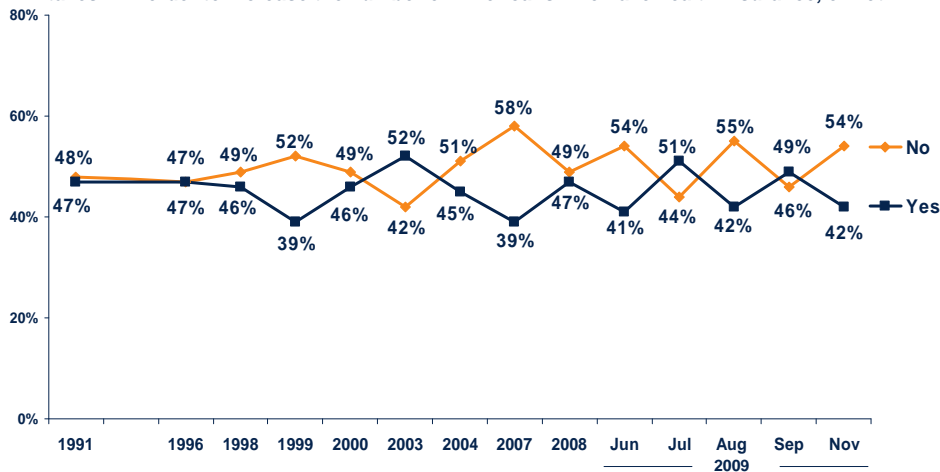
Note: Follow up question on left asked of those who initially favored. Graph below it based on total, where "oppose" includes those who initially opposed along with those who opposed after hearing the follow up. Follow up question on right asked of those who initially opposed. Graph below it based on total, where "favor" includes those who initially favored along with those who favored after hearing the follow up. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
 Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted September 11-18, 2009)



CHART 15

Willingness to pay

Would you be willing to pay more -- either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes -- in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?



Note: Asked of half sample July - November 2009. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
 Sources: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll (Jun. 1991), KFF/HSPH Polls (Nov. 1996; Nov. 1998; Oct. 1999; Nov. 2000; Feb. 2003; and Nov. 2004), Washington Post/KFF/HSPH Survey (May 2007), KFF/HSPH *The Public's Health Care Agenda for the New President and Congress* (Dec. 2008); Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, and Nov 2009)

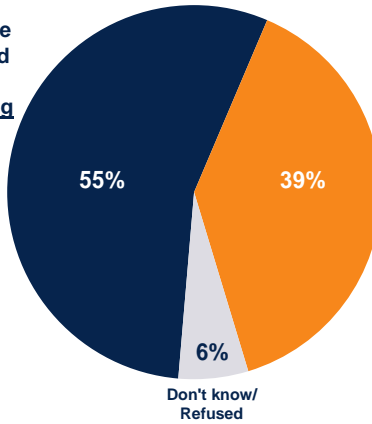


CHART 16

Many say reform can happen without spending

Which comes closer to your opinion:

If policymakers make the right changes they could reform the health care system without spending more money to do it



To make any real reforms to the health care system, policymakers will need to spend more money, either by raising some taxes, taking from other programs or increasing the deficit

Source: Kaiser Health Tracking Poll (conducted July 7-14, 2009)



CHART 17

Some tax options

Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following to help pay for health care reform and provide coverage for more of the uninsured.

■ Strongly favor ■ Somewhat favor ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose

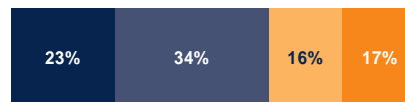
Increasing income taxes for people from families making more than \$1 million a year and individuals making more than \$500,000



Having health insurance companies pay a tax for offering very expensive policies



Having health insurance companies pay a fee based on how much business they have



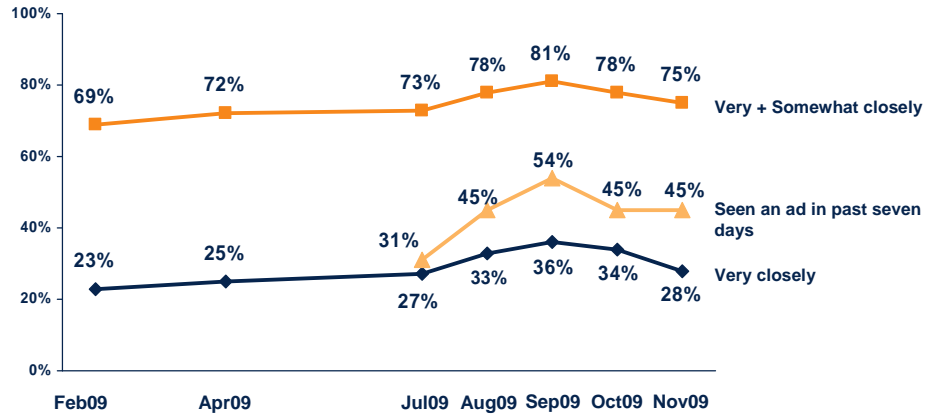
Note: Based on half sample. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)



CHART 18

Public attention: Reform often top story

How closely have you been following discussions in Washington about health care reform?



Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

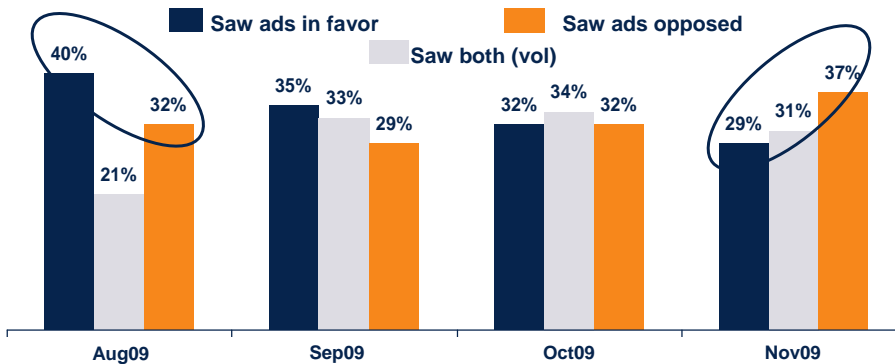


CHART 19

Balance tilts somewhat to ads opposed

BASED ON THOSE WHO REPORT HAVING SEEN OR HEARD A HEALTH REFORM AD IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS (45 percent of the adult population in November)*

As far as you could tell, were those ads in favor of or opposed to passing some sort of health care reform this year?



*Note: Based on 45 percent of the population in Aug. and Oct., and 54 percent in Sep. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

