

AMERICANS' VALUES AND BELIEFS ABOUT NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

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Reforming the U.S. health insurance system has become a major issue in the upcoming presidential election, both in primaries and likely in the general election. There are a number of different health care reform proposals that have been put forth by candidates and parties, but prior studies show that voters in the general public are often not aware of the details of these plans. This suggests that the differentiation voters make between one plan and another is likely based on underlying values, beliefs, and life experiences. This report addresses specifically adults' views in these three areas, as they relate to health insurance reform proposals supported by the public.

One of the issues that has emerged in recent polling on health insurance reform is that people often report they support more than one type of plan, even though these plans are often very different from each other from a policy perspective. This poll seeks to examine this issue by asking people who are interviewed to choose the plan that they **most** favor among the three major plans that are being debated currently: (1) Medicare-for-all, (2) improving the existing Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), or (3) replacing the Affordable Care Act with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules. These preferences can change over time.

The report consists of findings about Americans' values and beliefs on national health insurance reform in seven sections:

1. The preferred role of government generally in the U.S.
2. The preferred role for government in health care
3. Attitudes towards the current U.S. health care system
4. Views on equal treatment in the U.S. health care system
5. Personal experiences with health care and health issues
6. Views on the future desired direction of health insurance reform in the U.S.
7. Public trust in groups trying to improve the U.S. health care system

In addition, this report includes an additional section on how these issues are likely to be seen in the Democratic primary and the general election in 2020.

About the Survey Sample

This survey was conducted for The Commonwealth Fund, *The New York Times*, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health by SSRS, an independent research company.

Respondents were asked to choose the plan that they **most** favor among the three major plans that are being debated currently: (1) Medicare-for-all, (2) improving the existing Affordable Care Act (ACA), or (3) replacing the ACA with state health plans. See Table A below details on Americans' broad preferences for the type of health insurance system the U.S. should have in the future. Notably, none of the three policies received a majority of Americans' support as their most-favored plan.

Table A. Americans' preferences for future health insurance system plans (in percent)

Total adults	100
Preferred policy	
Medicare-for-all Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All.	32
Improving the existing ACA Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works.	28
Replacing the ACA with state health plans Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules.	29

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults.

Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, July 10 – August 11, 2019, with a nationally representative, probability-based sample of 2,005 randomly selected adults, ages 18 and older, via telephone (including cell phones and landlines). The data were weighted to reflect the demographics of the national adult population as described by the U.S. Census. Additional methodology is available at the end of the report.

1. The preferred role of government generally in the U.S.

People who prefer each of the three different approaches to national health insurance reform are divided in their views about the preferred role of government in general.

Adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans hold the most negative views of government, as 69% say things run by the federal government are not run too well or not well at all, while 31% say things run by the federal government are run very or somewhat well. Those who favor Medicare-for-all and improving the existing ACA are more evenly split in their views. A slight majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (52%) think when something is run by the federal government, it is generally run very or somewhat well, while 46% think it is not run too well or not well at all (Table 1). Half of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (50%) think things run by the federal government are run very or somewhat well, while 48% think things run by the government are not run too well or not well at all.

Table 1. Americans' views on their preferred role of government (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
When something is run by the federal government, it is generally run...				
Very/somewhat well	43	52	50	31
Not too well/not well at all	56	46	48	69
Government regulation of businesses and corporations...				
Is necessary to protect the public	61	70	76	44
Usually does more harm than good	34	25	21	54
Image of capitalism				
Positive	57	41	53	73
Negative	35	48	41	22
Image of socialism				
Positive	34	56	40	13
Negative	59	37	51	82

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don't know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

Americans who prefer different health plans are also divided in their beliefs about whether government regulation of business does more harm than good. When asked which comes closer to their own view, more than three-quarters of adults favoring improving the existing ACA (76%) say government regulation of businesses and corporations is necessary to protect the public, while 21% say government regulation of businesses and corporations usually does more harm than good. Medicare-for-all proponents expressed similar views, with 70% saying government regulation is necessary to protect the public and 25% saying government regulation usually does more harm than good. However, among adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, a slight majority (54%) say government regulation usually does more harm than good, while 44% say government regulation is necessary to protect the public.

In addition, there are dramatic differences in views about capitalism and socialism, by Americans' preferred approach to national health reform. On capitalism, more than seven in ten adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (73%) say they have a positive image of capitalism, compared to only four in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all (41%). Adults who favor improving the existing ACA are more split, as a slight majority (53%) say they have a positive image of capitalism. On socialism, a majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (56%) have a positive image of socialism, compared just 13% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans. Adults who favor improving the existing ACA are more divided, as four in ten (40%) say they have a positive image of socialism.

2. The preferred role for government in health care

Regardless of their preferences for health insurance reform, a majority of the public believes all Americans have a right to health care regardless of their ability to pay. However, the public is split on whether it is the federal government's role to solve these problems (Table 2).

Most adults favoring Medicare-for-all (94%) and improving the existing ACA (91%) think all Americans should have a right to health care regardless of their ability to pay, while six in ten adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (60%) say this. However, when it comes to government involvement, while majorities of adults favoring Medicare-for-all (85%) and improving the existing ACA (73%) say they think it is the responsibility of the government to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage, only one in five adults favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans (20%) say this.

When asked about the future role of the federal government in health care, about two-thirds of adults favoring Medicare-for-all (67%) say the federal government should be more involved, while 14% say it should be less involved, and 16% say it should be about as involved as it is now. By contrast, about two-thirds of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (65%) say the federal government should be *less* involved in health care, while only 17% say it should be more involved, and 16% say it should be about as involved as it is now. A slight majority of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (54%) say the federal government should be more involved in health care, while 15% say it should be less involved, and 28% say it should be about as involved as it is now.

When it comes to providing health insurance in the U.S., about three-quarters of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (73%) and a majority of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (55%) say they prefer a health insurance system run mostly by the government over a system based mostly on private health insurance. By contrast, most adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (84%) say they prefer a health insurance system based mostly on private insurance over one run mostly by the government.

Table 2. Americans’ preferred role for federal government involvement in health care (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
Views on health care as a right				
All Americans should have a right to health care regardless of their ability to pay	79	94	91	60
All Americans should not have a right to health care regardless of their ability to pay	18	5	6	35
Government responsibility for health insurance coverage				
It is the responsibility of the government to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage	56	85	73	20
It is not the responsibility of the government to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage	41	13	23	76
In the future, the federal government should be ... in health care				
More involved	43	67	54	17
Less involved	35	14	15	65
About as involved as it is now	19	16	28	16
Preferred approach for providing health insurance in the United States				
Health insurance system run mostly by the government	44	73	55	14
Health insurance system based mostly on private health insurance	49	20	36	84

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans’ Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don’t know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

3. Attitudes towards the current U.S. health care system

Americans are split in their attitudes toward the current U.S. health care system, by their preferences for health reform (Table 3). While divisions exist on how the U.S. health care system compares to other countries and public opinion on the Affordable Care Act, regardless of their preferences for health insurance reform, a majority of the public holds favorable views of current public and private health insurance options.

On comparing the U.S. health care system with other countries, a majority of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (55%) say the U.S. has the best health care system in the world (Table 3). By contrast, only about three in ten (29%) adults favoring improving the existing ACA and 21% of adults favoring Medicare-for-all say this, as majorities of adults favoring these policies say there are other countries with better health care systems than the U.S.

Table 3. Americans' attitudes towards the U.S. health care system (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
Comparing the U.S. health care system with other countries...				
The U.S. has the best health care system in the world	36	21	29	55
There are other countries with better health care systems than the U.S.	48	69	55	30
Public opinion about the Affordable Care Act				
Favorable	53	67	83	21
Unfavorable	41	24	13	75
Rating the U.S. health care system				
Excellent/good	35	24	33	49
Fair/poor	64	75	67	49
Public opinion about Medicare*				
Very/somewhat favorable	80	86	83	77
Very/somewhat unfavorable	15	11	12	19
Public opinion about Medicaid**				
Very/somewhat favorable	70	81	77	60
Very/somewhat unfavorable	23	12	18	32
Public opinion about private health insurance provided by employers				
Very/somewhat favorable	68	51	68	84
Very/somewhat unfavorable	26	41	27	14

Views on Medicaid work requirements				
Low-income adults who are able to work should be required to do so in order to receive Medicaid coverage	56	37	49	79
Low-income adults who are able to work should be able to receive Medicaid coverage, regardless of whether or not they are working	40	59	47	19
Views on health insurance coverage for illegal immigrants				
Government health care programs should cover anyone living in the U.S., including those who have entered the U.S. illegally	37	58	49	13
Government health care programs should only cover legal residents of the U.S.	60	39	46	86
Views on abortion				
Should be legal in all/most cases	61	72	76	39
Should be illegal in all/most cases	34	22	17	57

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don't know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown. *Medicare described as the government health insurance program for seniors and for younger adults with long-term disabilities. **Medicaid described as the federal and state government health insurance program for low-income adults and children.

More than eight in ten Americans who favor improving the existing ACA (83%) say they generally have a favorable opinion of the ACA, while about two-thirds of Americans who favor Medicare-for-all have a favorable opinion of the ACA (67%). Meanwhile, only about one in five Americans who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (21%) say they have a favorable opinion of the ACA.

When it comes to rating the U.S. health care system, a majority of adults favoring Medicare-for-all (75%) rate the U.S. health care system negatively as fair or poor, while only 24% rate it as excellent or good. Two-thirds of adults favoring improving the existing ACA (67%) also rate the U.S. health care system negatively as fair or poor, while one-third (33%) rate it as excellent or good. Adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans are more split in their ratings of the U.S. health care system, with about half (49%) rating it as excellent or good and about half (49%) rating it as fair or poor.

When asked about Medicare, described as the government health insurance program for seniors and for younger adults with long-term disabilities, 86% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all, 83% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 77% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans say they generally have a favorable view of Medicare. When asked about Medicaid, described as the federal and state government health insurance program for low-income adults and children, 81% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all, 77% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 60% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans say they generally have a favorable view of Medicaid. When asked about private health insurance provided by employers, 84% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, 68% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 51% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all say they generally have a favorable view of private health insurance.

Recently, a number of states have proposed work requirements in Medicaid as a condition of eligibility. When asked whether low-income adults who are able to work should be required to do so in order to receive Medicaid coverage, about eight in ten adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (79%) say they should be required to work, while 19% say they should be able to receive Medicaid coverage regardless of whether or not they are working. Meanwhile, only 37% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all say low-income adults who are able to work should be required to do so, and 59% say low-income adults who are able to work should be able to receive Medicaid coverage regardless of whether or not they are working. Adults who favor improving the existing ACA are split, with 49% saying low-income adults who are able to work should be required to do so in order to receive Medicaid coverage, and 47% saying they should be able to receive Medicaid coverage regardless of whether or not they are working.

In addition, a majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (58%) think government health care programs should cover anyone living in the U.S., including those who have entered the country illegally, while 39% of Medicare-for-all proponents think government health care programs should only cover legal U.S. residents. By contrast, only 13% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans think government health care programs should cover anyone living in the U.S. (including illegal immigrants), while 86% think government health care programs should only cover legal U.S. residents. Adults who favor improving the existing ACA are about evenly split, where 49% think government health care programs should cover anyone living in the U.S. (including illegal immigrants), and 46% think government health care programs should only cover legal U.S. residents.

When asked whether abortion should be legal or illegal, more than seven in ten adults who favor replacing the existing ACA (76%) and Medicare-for-all (72%) think abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while the majority of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (57%) think abortion should be illegal in all or most cases.

4. Views on equal treatment in the U.S. health care system

When it comes to equal treatment in U.S. health care, large majorities of adults favoring all three plans share views that while equal treatment is not a current reality, it is an important goal. When it comes to health care people receive, about nine in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all (89%) and improving the existing ACA (89%), as well as 69% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, say some Americans are not treated as well as others (Table 4).

Table 4. Americans' views on equal treatment (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
Views on equal treatment in U.S. health care				
All Americans are treated equally	16	9	10	26
Some Americans are not treated as well as others	81	89	89	69
Importance of equal treatment in health care for all Americans				
Very important	77	89	87	62
Somewhat important	16	8	11	26
Not too/not at all important	6	3	2	10
Importance of poor American families receiving same quality of health care as rich American families				
Very important	79	91	86	64
Somewhat important	16	7	12	26
Not too/not at all important	5	2	2	7
Importance of African Americans receiving same quality of health care as White Americans				
Very important	88	94	95	80
Somewhat important	8	5	4	12
Not too/not at all important	2	1	<1%	2

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don't know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

On the importance of equal treatment, 89% of adults favoring Medicare-for-all, 87% of those favoring improving the existing ACA, and 62% of those favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans say it is very important to them that all Americans be treated equally in terms of the health care they receive. When asked about the importance to them that poor American families receive the same quality of health care as rich American families, 91% of adults favoring Medicare-for-all, 86% of those favoring improving the existing ACA, and 64% of those favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans say it is very important. And when asked about the importance to them that African Americans receive the same quality of health care as White Americans, 94% of adults favoring Medicare-for-all, 95% of those favoring improving the existing ACA, and 80% of those favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans say it is very important.

5. Personal experiences with health care and health issues

When it comes to personal experiences with health care and health issues, there are relatively small differences between Americans by their preferred approach to health insurance reform. The largest difference is reported satisfaction with the way things are going in the nation today, where adults who favor replacing the ACA with state-run plans are largely satisfied, while those favoring Medicare-for-all and improving the existing ACA are not. In addition, a greater share of adults who favor Medicare-for-all express concerns about health care costs and their ability to pay future medical bills compared to those who prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans. However, large majorities of adults preferring all three plans say they are satisfied with their current health insurance coverage.

Two-thirds of adults who favor replacing the ACA (67%) say they are very or somewhat satisfied with the way things are going in the nation today (Table 5). By contrast, only about one in three adults who favor improving the existing ACA (32%) and about one in four adults favoring Medicare-for-all (26%) say they are satisfied with how things are going in the nation today.

On health care costs (Table 5), a majority (56%) of adults who favor Medicare-for-all, 44% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 45% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans say they have been dissatisfied with the cost of their health care in the past few years.

On health care access, about one-third of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (34%), 18% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 19% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans report being dissatisfied with their ability to get health care when they needed it in the last few years.

On health care quality, about one-quarter of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (24%), 15% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, and 18% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans report being dissatisfied with the quality of their healthcare in the last few years.

When it comes to concerns about future medical bills, the majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (63%) and about half of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (51%) say they are worried about not being able to pay their medical bills if they get sick in the next year. By contrast, only one-third of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (33%) say they are worried about this.

Table 5. Americans’ personal experiences with health care and health issues (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
Satisfaction with the way things are going in the nation today				
Very/somewhat satisfied	42	26	32	67
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	55	73	66	31
Satisfaction with the cost of your health care				
Very/somewhat satisfied	49	42	54	53
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	49	56	44	45
Satisfaction with your ability to get health care when you need it				
Very/somewhat satisfied	74	64	82	80
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	24	34	18	19
Satisfaction with the quality of your health care				
Very/somewhat satisfied	79	75	84	81
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	20	24	15	18
Concerns about ability to pay your medical bills if you get sick in the next year				
Very/somewhat worried	47	63	51	33
Not too/not at all worried	52	37	49	67
Satisfaction with your current health insurance coverage (among those with health insurance)				
Very/somewhat satisfied	84	79	90	85
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	16	20	9	15
Health status				
Excellent/very good/good	78	72	77	83
Only fair/poor	22	28	23	17
Have a disability	21	25	23	17
Have a chronic illness	45	47	49	41

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans’ Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don’t know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

Despite these concerns, vast majorities of insured adults favoring all three major health reform proposals—90% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, 85% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, and 79% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all—say they are satisfied with their current health insurance coverage.

When it comes to health status and experiencing health issues, more than one in four adults who favor Medicare-for-all (28%) say they are in only fair or poor health, compared to less than one in five (17%) of those who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans. Adults are similar across groups when it comes to having a disability or chronic illness (see Table 5).

6. Views on the future desired direction of health insurance reform in the U.S.

When asked about government requiring everyone to have health insurance, without any mention of a fine or tax, more two-thirds of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (71%) and Medicare-for-all (69%) say they favor government requirements for everyone to have health insurance. By contrast, only about one in four adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (24%) favor government requirements for everyone to have health insurance, with 75% saying they oppose this (Table 6).

On pre-existing conditions, proponents of all three plans share similar views about government requirements for health insurance companies (Table 6). More than nine in ten proponents of improving the existing ACA (91%) favor the government continuing to require insurance companies to provide health insurance for Americans with pre-existing conditions, even though this has led to increased insurance costs for some healthy people. More than eight in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all (84%) also share this view, as do nearly three-quarters of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (73%).

When asked whether government should require that all health insurance plans have at least a minimum set of health benefits, or whether individuals and businesses should be allowed to make their own choices of different types of health insurance benefits, a majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (56%) and slight majority of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (54%) prefer requirements for a minimum set of health benefits. However, among adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, more than three-quarters (78%) prefer that individuals and businesses are allowed to make their own choices of different types of health insurance benefits.

Table 6. Americans' views on the future desired direction of health insurance reform in the U.S. (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
Views on government requiring everyone to have health insurance				
Favor	52	69	71	24
Oppose	47	29	26	75
Views on government continuing to require health insurance coverage for Americans with pre-existing conditions				
Favor	82	84	91	73
Oppose	14	11	5	23
Views on government requirements for basic health insurance benefits				
Government should require all health insurance plans to have at least a minimum set of health benefits	41	56	54	20
Individuals and businesses should be allowed to make their own choices of different types of health insurance benefits	55	40	41	78
Would personally be willing to pay more taxes so everyone can have health insurance				
Willing	53	79	67	23
Unwilling	45	19	32	74
Views on increasing taxes on higher income people so everyone can have health insurance				
Favor	59	84	76	27
Oppose	39	15	21	70
Preferences for higher taxes/premiums vs. out-of-pocket medical bills				
Would rather pay higher taxes or premiums and never pay out-of-pocket medical bills	47	69	51	28
Would rather pay lower taxes or premiums and some health care fees	48	27	42	69
Preferences for most hospitals in the U.S. to be operated by...				
Non-profit organizations	45	44	48	43
For-profit organizations	12	2	8	21
Government agencies	9	19	10	2
It doesn't matter	29	30	29	30

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Don't know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

On the topic of increasing taxes to pay for health insurance, more than three-quarters of adults favoring Medicare-for-all (79%) and two-thirds of adults favoring improving the existing ACA (67%) say they would personally be willing to pay more in taxes so that everyone can have health insurance in the U.S. However, fewer than one in four adults favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans (23%) say they would personally be willing to pay more in taxes so that everyone can have health insurance in the U.S.

Americans share similar views when it comes to taxing higher income Americans. When asked if they favor or oppose increasing taxes on higher income people so everyone can have health insurance, more than eight in ten adults favoring Medicare-for-all (84%) and about three-quarters of adults favoring improving the existing ACA (76%) favor increasing taxes on higher-income people. Only about one in four adults favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans (27%) favor these increases; 70% of these adults oppose increasing taxes on higher income people for this purpose.

When asked about preferences for paying premiums versus out-of-pocket costs, a majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all (69%) and about half of those who favor improving the existing ACA (51%) say they would rather pay higher taxes or premiums in exchange for never having to pay any out-of-pocket medical bills. By contrast, more than two-thirds of adults favoring replacing the ACA with state health plans (69%) say they would rather pay lower taxes or premiums and pay some fees when they use the health care system.

When it comes to hospitals being operated by for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, or government agencies, proponents of all three health reform plans are most likely to choose non-profit hospitals. About half of adults who favor improving the existing ACA (48%) would prefer most hospitals in the U.S. be operated by non-profit organizations, followed by 29% of these adults saying it doesn't matter, 10% saying government agencies, and 8% saying for-profit organizations. More than four in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all (44%) would prefer most hospitals in the U.S. be operated by non-profit organizations, followed by 30% saying it doesn't matter, 19% saying government agencies, and 2% saying for-profit organizations. More than four in ten adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans (43%) would also prefer most hospitals in the U.S. be operated by non-profit organizations, followed by 30% saying it doesn't matter, 21% saying for-profit organizations, and only 2% saying government agencies.

7. Public trust in groups trying to improve the U.S. health care system

When it comes to public trust in various groups trying to improve the U.S. health care system, Americans favoring all three plans generally do not trust any interest major groups, with the exception of nurses (Table 7). Pharmaceutical companies and health insurance companies are the least-trusted groups, while state and federal governments, Congress, and business leaders also earn low levels of public trust.

Nurses received the highest levels of overall trust, with 65% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA; 59% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans; and 54% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all saying they trust nurses ‘a great deal’ when it comes to trying to improve the U.S. health care system. Pharmaceutical companies and health insurance companies received the lowest levels of overall trust. Pharmaceutical companies earned ‘a great deal’ of trust from only 5% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, 4% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all, and 3% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, while health insurance companies earned ‘a great deal’ of trust from only 6% of adults who favor improving the existing ACA, 5% of adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, and 3% of adults who favor Medicare-for-all.

Table 7. Public trust in groups to improve the U.S. health care system (in percent)

	Total	Prefer Medicare-for-all	Prefer improving the existing ACA	Prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans
‘A great deal’ of public trust in...				
Nurses	58	54	65	59
Doctors	30	25	31	36
Hospitals	18	15	21	18
Labor unions	14	20	19	6
State governments	6	8	6	4
The federal government	6	9	5	3
Congress	5	5	8	3
Business leaders	5	4	5	7
Health insurance companies	4	3	6	5
Pharmaceutical companies	4	4	5	3

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans’ Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults. Groups ranked in order of ‘a great deal’ % indicated by respondents overall. Don’t know/refused responses are included in the total but are not shown.

How these issues are likely to play out in a partisan electoral environment

Americans' values and beliefs on national health insurance reform are likely to become major issues in the upcoming Democratic primary election and general election in 2020.

Among Democrats who are registered voters, there are important differences in preferences for health insurance reform by political ideology (Table 8). Those with a liberal political ideology represent 55% of all registered Democrats, while those with conservative and moderate ideologies together represent 42% of all registered Democrats. While a slight majority of liberal Democrats (52%) favor Medicare-for-all the most, 42% favor improving the existing ACA, and 4% favor replacing the ACA with state health plans. By contrast, among conservative and moderate Democrats, no plan received majority support, where 47% of conservative and moderate Democrats favor improving the existing ACA, while about four in ten (39%) favor Medicare-for-all, and 12% favor replacing the ACA with state health plans.

Table 8. Democrats' Preferences for Future U.S. Health Insurance System Proposals Among Registered Voters, By Political Ideology (in percent)

	Conservative/Moderate Democrats (42% of all registered Democrats)	Liberal Democrats (55% of all registered Democrats)
Preferred approach to U.S. health insurance reform		
Medicare-for-all	39	52
Improving the existing ACA	47	42
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	12	4

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults.

Among all registered voters, there are clear divisions by political party affiliation in health reform preferences and the importance of health care as an election issue (Table 9). While the most-preferred plan by a slight majority of registered Republican voters is replacing the ACA with state health plans (55%), no plan received majority support as the most-preferred by registered Democrats and Independents. Notably, about one in five registered Republican voters (21%) did not choose any of the three plans as their most-preferred option. The most-preferred plans by registered Democratic voters are split between Medicare-for-all (46%) and improving the existing ACA (45%). Registered Independent voters are equally divided in their preferences for health reform between Medicare-for-all (30%), replacing the ACA with state health plans (30%), and improving the existing ACA (30%).

When it comes to the importance of health care in voters’ decisions regarding the upcoming 2020 election, 77% of registered Democrats identified health care as a ‘very important’ issue to their 2020 vote, compared to 59% of registered Independents and only 44% of registered Republicans.

Table 9. Preferences for Future U.S. Health Insurance System Proposals and Importance of Health Care as an Election Issue Among Registered Voters, By Political Party Affiliation (in percent)

	All Registered Voters	Registered Republicans (28% of all registered voters)	Registered Democrats (33% of all registered voters)	Registered Independents (31% of all registered voters)
Preferred approach to U.S. health insurance reform				
Medicare-for-all	29	11	46	30
Improving the existing ACA	29	12	45	30
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	30	55	7	30
None	10	21	2	8
Importance of health care issues in your vote in the 2020 election				
Very important	60	44	77	59
Somewhat important	27	34	18	29
Not too/not at all important	12	21	4	12

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans’ Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults.

Among all respondents, there are many similarities and some important differences in health reform preferences by demographic characteristics, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and annual household income (Table 10).

Notably, Medicare-for-all does not receive majority support as the most-preferred plan by adults ages 65 and older. Among Americans ages 65+, who generally qualify for full Medicare benefits, their most-preferred plans are split between improving the existing ACA (31%), Medicare-for-all (30%), and replacing the ACA with state health plans (27%).

There are some racial/ethnic and income-based differences in health reform preferences, as fewer Black (13%) and Latino (23%) adults say replacing the ACA with state health plans is their most-preferred plan compared to Whites (34%). Adults in households with incomes less than \$25,000 per year are more likely to say they prefer Medicare-for-all (40%) compared to those in households with incomes of at least \$75,000 per year (26%). Meanwhile, those in households earning \$50,000-<\$75,000/year (31%) and those in households earning \$75,000/year+ (34%) are more likely to say they prefer replacing the ACA with state health plans compared to those in households earning <\$25,000/year (21%).

Table 10. Demographics of Respondents and Most-Preferred Future U.S. Health Insurance System Proposals (in percent)

	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65+
Medicare-for-all	37	31	30	30
Improving the existing ACA	28	26	29	31
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	28	32	28	27
None	4	10	12	11
	Men		Women	
Medicare-for-all	29		34	
Improving the existing ACA	25		32	
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	34		25	
None	11		9	
	White	Black	Latino	
Medicare-for-all	29	38	39	
Improving the existing ACA	24	47	31	
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	34	13	23	
None	12	1	6	

	<College Degree	College Graduates		
Medicare-for-all	33	29		
Improving the existing ACA	26	33		
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	30	27		
None	10	9		
	<\$25k/yr income	\$25k- <\$50k/yr income	\$50k- <\$75k/yr income	\$75k+ income
Medicare-for-all	40	35	32	26
Improving the existing ACA	31	26	25	30
Replacing the ACA with state health plans	21	30	31	34
None	8	8	11	9

Source: The Commonwealth Fund/The New York Times/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Americans' Values and Beliefs about National Health Insurance Reform. July 10 – August 11, 2019. N=2,005 U.S. adults.

Conclusions

This report examines Americans' current beliefs, values, and experiences, according to their preferences on three major proposals for national health reform. The results point to significant conclusions, which are timely given the importance of health care as an upcoming issue in the Democratic primaries and the 2020 presidential election.

We polled Americans' values and beliefs across seven different areas: the preferred role of government generally, the preferred role of government in health care, attitudes toward the current U.S. health care system, views on equal treatment in health care, personal experiences with health care, views on the future desired direction of health insurance reform, and public trust in groups trying to improve the U.S. health care system.

Notably, none of the three policies received a majority of Americans' support as their most-favored plan, suggesting major divisions in preferences on the future of health insurance reform. We found the greatest differences in public opinion are the preferred role of government in health care, attitudes toward the current U.S. health care system, and views on increasing taxes so everyone can have health insurance. Proponents of all three plans showed the greatest similarities in shared values for equality in health care and trust in similar groups trying to improve health care, as well as their personal experiences.

Overall, Americans who prefer Medicare-for-all and those who prefer improving the existing ACA share similar views in several areas that lie in contrast to the views of those who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans. However, proponents of Medicare-for-all and improving the existing ACA also differ in important ways. They are split in their views of the economy, where a slight majority of adults who favor improving the existing ACA have a positive image of capitalism, while a majority of adults who favor Medicare-for-all have a positive image of socialism. Meanwhile, two-thirds of Medicare-for-all proponents prefer more federal government involvement in health care, compared to only a slight majority of proponents of improving the existing ACA. In addition, about two-thirds of adults who favor improving the existing ACA hold favorable opinions about private health insurance provided by employers, compared to only about half of adults favoring Medicare-for-all who share this view.

Among all three groups, there are dramatic differences in views on the preferred role of government involvement in health care. While more than eight in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all and more than seven in ten adults who favor improving the existing ACA say they think it is the responsibility of the government to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage, only one in five adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans say this. More than seven in ten adults who favor Medicare-for-all and a majority of adults who favor improving the existing ACA prefer a health insurance system run mostly by the government, while only about one in seven adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans prefer this approach.

Americans are also divided in their attitudes toward the current U.S. health care system, by their preferences for health reform. While large majorities of adults who are proponents of improving the existing ACA and Medicare-for-all hold favorable opinions of the Affordable Care Act, three-quarters of adults who are proponents of replacing the ACA with state health plans hold unfavorable opinions about it. This suggests major divisions in public opinion, both in how the U.S. health care system is currently operating, as well as the path forward.

Americans also hold opposing views according to their preferences for health reform about increasing taxes so everyone can have health insurance. While large majorities of adults who favor Medicare-for-all and improving the existing ACA favor increasing taxes so everyone can have health insurance, seven in ten adults who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans oppose tax increases.

When it comes to equal treatment in U.S. health care, large majorities of adults favoring all three approaches to health reform share views that while equal treatment is not a current reality, it is an important goal. Americans generally share views on the importance of equal treatment, regardless of income or race.

When it comes to public trust in various groups trying to improve the U.S. health care system, Americans favoring all three plans generally do not trust any interest major groups, with the exception of nurses. This suggests that if outside groups are to play an important role in shaping the future of health reform, they will need to coalesce around a shared vision of what it should look like.

In addition, we found that people's personal experiences, though important to individuals, do not generally drive opinions about preferences for health reform. While a greater share of adults who favor Medicare-for-all express concerns about health care costs and health care access compared to those who favor improving the existing ACA and those who favor replacing the ACA with state health plans, large majorities of adults preferring all three plans say they are satisfied with their current health insurance coverage.

As we look ahead to the debate over national health insurance reform, it is clear that Americans' viewpoints on health care issues are heavily driven by their basic beliefs and values. Medicare-for-all is a powerful issue in the Democratic primary, but for Americans who are Republicans or Independents, this approach to health insurance reform does not resonate the same way. These Americans are split in preferences between improving the existing ACA and developing other alternatives.

Methodology

This survey was conducted for The Commonwealth Fund, *The New York Times*, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health by SSRS, an independent research company.

Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, July 10 – August 11, 2019, with a nationally representative, probability-based sample of 2,005 randomly selected adults, ages 18 and older, via telephone (including cell phones and landlines). The data were weighted to reflect the demographics of the national adult population as described by the U.S. Census.

When interpreting these findings, one should recognize that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole U.S. adult population had been interviewed. The margin of error for the full sample is ± 2.5 percentage points.

Possible sources of non-sampling error include non-response bias, as well as question wording and ordering effects. Non-response in telephone surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population. To compensate for these known biases and for variations in probability of selection within and across households, sample data are weighted by household size, cell phone/landline use and demographics (sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, and region) to reflect the true population. Other techniques, including random-digit dialing, replicate subsamples, and systematic respondent selection within households, are used to ensure that the sample is representative.

	Number of interviews (unweighted)	Margin of error at the 95% confidence level (%age points)	Weighted % of total sample
Total adults	2,005	+/-2.5	100
Preferred policy *			
Plan A: Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All.	618	+/-4.6	32
Plan B: Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works.	611	+/-4.7	28
Plan C: Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules.	550	+/-4.8	29
Half-sample A	994	+/-3.6	50
Half-sample B	1011	+/-3.6	50

*The remaining 11 percent of respondents favored none of the options or did not choose among them.

Definition of Preferred Policies

Q9. Currently there is a lot of discussion about what type of health insurance system the U.S. should have in the future. There are three proposals that are currently being discussed. Please tell me for each of the following whether you would support or oppose it. (First/Next), how about: (INSERT ITEM). Would you support or oppose this? (IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE: Would you strongly (support/oppose) or somewhat (support/oppose)?)

- a. Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All.
- b. Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works.
- c. Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules.

(Asked of those who strongly support two or more proposals)

Q10. Of those (two/three) options you just said you STRONGLY supported, which ONE do you MOST prefer?

(Asked of those who don't strongly support any, but somewhat support two or more proposals)

Q11. Of those (two/three) options you just said you supported, which ONE do you MOST prefer?

How the Preferred Policy Option variable is constructed:

- If respondent supports only one strongly, code it for that option.
- If respondent supports more than one option strongly, ask which they support most (among the ones they strongly support) and code it for that option.
- If respondent does not support any strongly, but somewhat supports only one, code it for that option.
- If respondent does not strongly support any and somewhat supports more than one option, ask which they support most (among those they somewhat support) and code it for that option.

This creates three mutually exclusive groups of respondents: those who MOST prefer each of the three plans.

**THE COMMONWEALTH FUND
THE NEW YORK TIMES
HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**AMERICANS' VALUES AND BELIEFS ABOUT
NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM**

This survey was conducted for The Commonwealth Fund, *The New York Times*, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, via telephone (landline and cell phone) by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, **July 10 – August 11, 2019**, among a nationally representative probability-based sample of 2,005 adults age 18 or older. The margin of error for the total respondents is +/-2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Table of Contents

	Page #
I. Assessments and Satisfaction	2
II. Attitudes Toward Government and Health Care	4
III. General Values	7
IV. Values about Inequality	8
V. Public Trust	9
VI. Attitudes about Government Policies	11
VII. Health Insurance	13
VIII. Health Demographics	15
IX. Demographics	16
X. Methodology	22

The tables show the responses of adults nationally (“Total”), as well as the responses of three mutually exclusive groups, based on respondents’ preferences among three proposals currently being discussed for what type of health insurance system the U.S. should have in the future. Each of these groups consists of adults who preferred that plan **MOST** among the three options offered.

- **Plan A:** Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All (preferred most by 32%).
- **Plan B:** Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works (preferred most by 28%).
- **Plan C:** Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules (preferred most by 29%).

See the Methodology section for more details.

I. Assessments and Satisfaction

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

Q1. In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in the nation today; are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

	<i>Very/ somewhat satisfied (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat dissatisfied (net)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied	Don't know/ Refused
Total	42	55	16	26	22	33	3
Plan A	26	73	7	19	24	49	1
Plan B	32	66	13	19	30	36	2
Plan C	67	31	26	41	14	17	2

Q2. How important will health care issues be in your vote in the 2020 election? Very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important? (Among registered voters)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't know/ Refused
Total registered voters	60	27	8	4	1
Plan A	77	17	3	3	*
Plan B	69	26	4	1	*
Plan C	40	37	16	7	*

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

Q3. In general, how would you rate the health care system in the United States? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

	<i>Excellent/ good (net)</i>	<i>Fair/poor (net)</i>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know/ Refused
Total	35	64	10	25	31	33	1
Plan A	24	75	6	18	32	43	1
Plan B	33	67	6	27	42	25	*
Plan C	49	49	15	34	20	29	2

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

Q4. Some people say that the United States has the best health care system in the world. Others say that the health care systems of some other countries are better than the U.S. How about you? Do you think that, in general, the U.S. has the best health care system, or are there other countries with better health care systems?

	U.S. has best health care system	Other countries have better health care systems	About the same (Vol.)	Don't know/ Refused
Total	36	48	2	14
Plan A	21	69	1	9
Plan B	29	55	2	14
Plan C	55	30	3	12

Q5a. Thinking about the last few years, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following...
 How about: (INSERT ITEM). Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

a. Your ability to get health care when you need it.

	<i>Very/ somewhat satisfied (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat dissatisfied (net)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied	Don't know/ Refused
Total	74	24	43	31	13	11	2
Plan A	64	34	27	37	16	18	2
Plan B	82	18	45	37	12	6	*
Plan C	80	19	55	25	10	9	1

b. The cost of your healthcare.

	<i>Very/ somewhat satisfied (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat dissatisfied (net)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied	Don't know/ Refused
Total	49	49	24	25	20	29	2
Plan A	42	56	21	21	17	39	2
Plan B	54	44	24	30	24	20	2
Plan C	53	45	26	27	20	25	2

c. The quality of your healthcare.

	<i>Very/ somewhat satisfied (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat dissatisfied (net)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied	Don't know/ Refused
Total	79	20	44	35	11	9	1
Plan A	75	24	34	41	11	13	1
Plan B	84	15	45	39	9	6	1
Plan C	81	18	53	28	10	8	1

Q8. Are you worried or not worried about not being able to pay your medical bills if you get sick in the next year? (IF WORRIED: Are you very worried, somewhat worried, or not too worried?)

	<i>Very/ somewhat worried (net)</i>	<i>Not too/ Not at all worried (net)</i>	Very worried	Somewhat worried	Not too worried	Not worried at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	47	52	28	19	17	35	1
Plan A	63	37	42	21	14	23	*
Plan B	51	49	27	24	16	33	*
Plan C	33	67	18	15	22	45	*

Questions 9a-c, 10, and 11 were used to determine the policy proposal respondents MOST preferred. See "Section X. Methodology."

II. Attitudes Toward Government and Health Care

Q12. In the future, how involved do you think the federal government should be in health care? Should it be (more involved), (less involved), or about as involved as it is now?

	More involved	Less involved	Involved as it is now	Don't know/ Refused
Total	43	35	19	3
Plan A	67	14	16	3
Plan B	54	15	28	3
Plan C	17	65	16	2

Q13. Do you think it is the responsibility of the government to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the government?

	Responsibility of government	Not responsibility of government	Don't know/ Refused
Total	56	41	3
Plan A	85	13	2
Plan B	73	23	4
Plan C	20	76	4

Q14. Do you favor or oppose increasing taxes on higher income people so everyone can have health insurance?

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know/ Refused
Total	59	39	2
Plan A	84	15	1
Plan B	76	21	3
Plan C	27	70	3

Q15. Would you personally be willing or unwilling to pay more in taxes so that everyone can have health insurance in the U.S.?

	Willing to pay more	Unwilling to pay more	Don't know/ Refused
Total	53	45	2
Plan A	79	19	2
Plan B	67	32	1
Plan C	23	74	3

Q16. Which of the following approaches for providing health insurance in the United States would you prefer--a health insurance system (run mostly by the government), or a system (based mostly on private health insurance)?

	Health insurance system run mostly by the government	Health insurance system based mostly on private health insurance	Don't know/ Refused
Total	44	49	7
Plan A	73	20	7
Plan B	55	36	9
Plan C	14	84	2

Q17. Now thinking about Medicare, the government health insurance program for seniors and for younger adults with long-term disabilities... In general, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of Medicare? (IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE: Is that a very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?)

	<i>Very/ somewhat favorable (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat unfavorable (net)</i>	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat un- favorable	Very un- favorable	Don't know/ Refused
Total	80	15	40	40	11	4	5
Plan A	86	11	46	40	9	2	3
Plan B	83	12	48	35	9	3	5
Plan C	77	19	31	46	14	5	4

Q18. Now thinking about Medicaid, the federal and state government health insurance program for low-income adults and children... In general, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of Medicaid? (IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE: Is that a very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?)

	<i>Very/ somewhat favorable (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat unfavorable (net)</i>	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat un- favorable	Very un- favorable	Don't know/ Refused
Total	70	23	32	38	13	10	7
Plan A	81	12	43	38	6	6	7
Plan B	77	18	38	39	12	6	5
Plan C	60	32	20	40	20	12	8

Q19. Now thinking about private health insurance provided by employers... In general, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion about private health insurance provided by employers? (IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE: Is that a very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?)

	<i>Very/ somewhat favorable (net)</i>	<i>Very/ somewhat unfavorable (net)</i>	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat un- favorable	Very un- favorable	Don't know/ Refused
Total	68	26	34	34	16	10	6
Plan A	51	41	20	31	24	17	8
Plan B	68	27	32	36	19	8	5
Plan C	84	14	48	36	9	5	2

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

Q20. Would you prefer that most hospitals in the U.S. be operated by (for-profit organizations), (non-profit organizations), (government agencies), or doesn't it matter?

	For-profit organizations	Non-profit organizations	Government agencies	Doesn't matter	Don't know/ Refused
Total	12	45	9	29	5
Plan A	2	44	19	30	5
Plan B	8	48	10	29	5
Plan C	21	43	2	30	4

Q22. Would you rather pay higher taxes or premiums in exchange for never having to pay any out-of-pocket medical bills? Or would you rather pay lower taxes or premiums and pay some fees when you use the health care system?

	Would rather pay higher taxes or premiums and never pay out-of-pocket medical bills	Would rather pay lower taxes or premiums and pay some health care fees	Don't know/ Refused
Total	47	48	5
Plan A	69	27	4
Plan B	51	42	7
Plan C	28	69	3

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

Q23. Do you think government health care programs should cover anyone living in the United States, including those who have entered the U.S. illegally, OR should they only cover those who are legal residents of the U.S.?

	Government health care programs cover anyone living in United States	Government health care programs cover legal residents in United States	Don't know/ Refused
Total	37	60	3
Plan A	58	39	3
Plan B	49	46	5
Plan C	13	86	1

III. General Values

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

Q24. I'm going to read you a pair of statements. Please tell me which statement comes closer to your own view--even if neither is exactly right. (READ LIST)

	Government regulation of businesses and corporations is necessary to protect the public	Government regulation of businesses and corporations usually does more harm than good	Don't know/ Refused
Total	61	34	5
Plan A	70	25	5
Plan B	76	21	3
Plan C	44	54	2

Q25. Thinking about when something is run by the federal government today, do you think it is generally run very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?

	Very/somewhat well (net)	Not too/not well at all (net)	Very well	Somewhat well	Not too well	Not well at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	43	56	4	39	29	27	1
Plan A	52	46	5	47	27	19	2
Plan B	50	48	4	46	30	18	2
Plan C	31	69	3	28	30	39	*

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

Q26. Just off the top of your head, would you say you have a positive or negative image of each of the following. How about (INSERT ITEM)?

a. Socialism

	Positive image	Negative image	Don't know/ Refused
Total	34	59	7
Plan A	56	37	7
Plan B	40	51	9
Plan C	13	82	5

b. Capitalism

	Positive image	Negative image	Don't know/ Refused
Total	57	35	8
Plan A	41	48	11
Plan B	53	41	6
Plan C	73	22	5

Q27. Do you think all Americans should have a right to health care regardless of ability to pay, or not?

	All Americans should have right to health care regardless of ability to pay	All Americans should not have right to health care regardless of ability to pay	Don't know/ Refused
Total	79	18	3
Plan A	94	5	1
Plan B	91	6	3
Plan C	60	35	5

IV. Values about Inequality

Q28. When it comes to the health care people receive, do you think all Americans are treated equally, or are some Americans not treated as well as others?

	All Americans are treated equally	Some Americans are not treated as well as others	Don't know/ Refused
Total	16	81	3
Plan A	9	89	2
Plan B	10	89	1
Plan C	26	69	5

Q29. How important is it to you that all Americans be treated equally in terms of the health care they receive? Very important, somewhat important, not too important, not important at all?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	77	16	4	2	1
Plan A	89	8	2	1	*
Plan B	87	11	1	1	-
Plan C	62	26	7	3	2

Q30. How important do you think it is that poor American families receive the same quality of health care as rich American families? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	79	16	3	2	*
Plan A	91	7	1	1	*
Plan B	86	12	1	1	*
Plan C	64	26	4	3	3

Q31. How important do you think it is that African Americans receive the same quality of health care as white Americans? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	88	8	1	1	2
Plan A	94	5	1	*	*
Plan B	95	4	-	*	1
Plan C	80	12	1	1	6

V. Public Trust

Q32. How much do you trust each of the following groups when it comes to trying to improve the U.S. health care system? How about (INSERT ITEM)? Do you trust them a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or not at all?

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

a. Hospitals

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	18	56	19	6	1
Plan A	15	52	23	10	*
Plan B	21	57	16	5	1
Plan C	18	62	16	3	1

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

b. Doctors

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	30	56	11	2	1
Plan A	25	58	13	3	1
Plan B	31	59	9	1	*
Plan C	36	53	10	1	-

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

c. Congress

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	5	25	38	30	2
Plan A	5	30	42	20	3
Plan B	8	29	42	20	1
Plan C	3	18	36	42	1

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

d. Business leaders

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	5	38	36	18	3
Plan A	4	25	36	31	4
Plan B	5	34	42	16	3
Plan C	7	53	31	8	1

(Asked of half-sample A; n=994)

e. Labor unions

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	14	43	22	16	5
Plan A	20	44	19	11	6
Plan B	19	51	18	6	6
Plan C	6	38	31	22	3

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

f. Nurses

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	58	36	4	1	1
Plan A	54	37	7	2	*
Plan B	65	29	4	1	1
Plan C	59	38	2	1	-

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

g. Pharmaceutical companies

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	4	21	30	44	1
Plan A	4	24	24	46	2
Plan B	5	21	35	37	2
Plan C	3	18	32	46	1

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

h. Health insurance companies

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	4	34	36	25	1
Plan A	3	30	35	32	*
Plan B	6	28	40	24	2
Plan C	5	40	35	18	2

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

i. The federal government

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	6	37	35	21	1
Plan A	9	42	35	13	1
Plan B	5	46	32	15	2
Plan C	3	27	39	31	*

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

j. State governments

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/ Refused
Total	6	42	33	17	2
Plan A	8	40	34	16	2
Plan B	6	46	37	9	2
Plan C	4	48	26	22	*

VI. Attitudes about Government Policies

Q33. As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't know/ Refused
Total	53	41	6
Plan A	67	24	9
Plan B	83	13	4
Plan C	21	75	4

Q34. Do you favor or oppose government continuing to require insurance companies to provide health insurance for Americans with pre-existing conditions, even though this has led to increased insurance costs for some healthy people?

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know/ Refused
Total	82	14	4
Plan A	84	11	5
Plan B	91	5	4
Plan C	73	23	4

Q35. Do you favor or oppose government requiring everyone to have health insurance?

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know/ Refused
Total	52	47	1
Plan A	69	29	2
Plan B	71	26	3
Plan C	24	75	1

Q36. Should government require that all health insurance plans have at least a minimum set of health benefits, or should individuals and businesses be allowed to make their own choices of different types of health insurance benefits?

	Government require all health insurance plans have at least a minimum set of health benefits	Individuals and business allowed to make their own choices in benefits	Don't know/ Refused
Total	41	55	4
Plan A	56	40	4
Plan B	54	41	5
Plan C	20	78	2

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

Q36a. Medicaid is the federal and state government health insurance program for low-income adults and children. Do you think that low-income adults who are able to work should be required to do so in order to receive Medicaid coverage, OR do you think they should be able to receive Medicaid coverage regardless of whether or not they are working?

	Should be required to work	Medicaid coverage regardless of whether or not they are working	Don't know/ Refused
Total	56	40	4
Plan A	37	59	4
Plan B	49	47	4
Plan C	79	19	2

(Asked of half-sample B; n=1011)

Q37. Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases?

	<i>Legal in all or most cases (net)</i>	<i>Illegal in all or most cases (net)</i>	Should be legal in all cases	Should be legal in most cases	Should be illegal in most cases	Should be illegal in all cases	Don't know/Refused
Total	61	34	28	33	21	13	5
Plan A	72	22	37	35	11	11	6
Plan B	76	17	34	42	10	7	7
Plan C	39	57	14	25	39	18	4

VII. Health Insurance

Q38. Now I would like to ask you about any health insurance you CURRENTLY have that helps pay for the cost of health care. I'm going to read a list of a few types of health insurance, and I'd like you to tell me which of these you have, if any. (First,) are you now PERSONALLY covered by (INSERT ITEM IN ORDER)?

(Asked of those who are covered by health insurance and are covered through Medicare; Total n=662; Plan A n=202; Plan B n=224; Plan C n=158)

Q39. Besides Medicare, do you have a Medicare-related PRIVATE health plan, often called Medicare Advantage, that pays for most of your doctor, hospital care, and prescription drugs?

Q38/Q39 Combo Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

Subcategories of insurance type add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

	Total	Plan A	Plan B	Plan C
Covered by any form of health insurance or health plan	90	88	93	90
Private health insurance through employer or union	54	48	55	58
Medicare (total)	25	24	28	21
Medicaid Only	5	7	4	3
Medicare Only	7	7	8	6
Medicare Advantage	11	11	13	11
Medicare + Medicaid	7	9	9	4
Health plan through Marketplace	12	14	17	7
Health insurance plan purchased directly through insurance company	17	14	15	21
Health insurance through other sources including military or veteran coverage	3	3	4	3
Not covered by health insurance	9	11	6	9
Don't know/Refused	1	1	1	1

(Asked of those who are covered by any form of health insurance or health plan; n=1,849)

Q40. Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with your current health insurance coverage?

	Very/ somewhat satisfied (net)	Very/ somewhat dissatisfied (net)	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied	Don't know/ Refused
Total	84	16	44	40	10	6	*
Plan A	79	20	35	44	13	7	1
Plan B	90	9	50	40	7	2	1
Plan C	85	15	46	39	7	8	*

(Asked of those who are covered by any form of health insurance or health plan; n=1,849)

Q41. During the last 12 months – since [INSERT MONTH] 2018 – did you have health insurance ALL the time, or was there a time during the year when you DID NOT have any health coverage?

	Had health insurance the past 12 months	Did not have health insurance the past 12 months	Don't know/Refused
Total	91	9	*
Plan A	89	11	*
Plan B	89	11	*
Plan C	94	6	-

Q38/Q41 Combo Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total	Plan A	Plan B	Plan C
Always been insured in the past 12 months	82	78	83	85
Uninsured now or ever been uninsured in the past 12 months	17	20	16	14
Don't know/Refused if ever been uninsured in the past 12 months	1	2	1	1

VIII. Health Demographics

Q42. In general, how would you describe your own health – excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Only fair	Poor	Don't know/ Refused
Total	21	33	24	16	6	*
Plan A	18	33	21	20	8	*
Plan B	21	32	24	18	5	*
Plan C	25	34	24	11	6	-

Q43. During the past 12 months, did you personally see a doctor, nurse, or medical professional for any reason?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	85	15	*
Plan A	83	17	*
Plan B	88	12	*
Plan C	84	16	-

Q44. Does any disability keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	21	78	1
Plan A	25	75	*
Plan B	23	77	*
Plan C	17	83	*

Q45. In the last few years, have you helped a sick friend or family member at home with their serious medical or health condition for an extended period of time?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	38	62	*
Plan A	39	60	1
Plan B	34	66	*
Plan C	39	61	*

Q46. Has a doctor or other health care professional ever told you that you have a chronic illness, such as heart disease, lung disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma or a mental health condition, or haven't they?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	45	54	1
Plan A	47	53	*
Plan B	49	50	1
Plan C	41	59	*

IX. Demographics

Q47. Are you registered to vote at your present address, or not?

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	81	19	*

(Asked of those who are registered to vote; n=1,678)

Q48. I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the 2020 presidential primary or caucus in your state. Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

Q47/Q48 Combo Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total
Yes, registered to vote	81
Absolutely certain to vote	66
Probably vote	8
50-50 chances will vote	5
Less than 50-50 chance will vote	2
No, not registered to vote	19
Don't know/Refused	*

(Asked of those who are registered to vote; n=1,678)

Q49. Do you consider yourself to be politically engaged or politically active, or not?

Q47/Q49 Combo Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total
Yes, registered to vote	81
Politically engaged or active	54
Not politically engaged or active	26
Don't know/Refused if politically engaged or active	1
No, not registered to vote	19
Don't know/Refused	*

Q51. Just to confirm: What is your current age?

Q52. Could you please tell me if you are...?

	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 or older	Refused
Total	19	33	26	21	1

Q53. Are you, yourself, of Latino or Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Latin American background?

Q54. (And besides being Latino,) What is your race? Are you white, black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander? (READ LIST)

(Asked of those who are both Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan Native)

Q54a. With which do you identify more? (READ LIST)

Race/Ethnicity Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total
Hispanic	15
White Non-Hispanic	64
Black Non-Hispanic	11
Asian Non-Hispanic	3
American Indian/Alaska Native (Native American)	2
Non-Hispanic Else	1
Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1
Non-Hispanic, No answer	3

Q55. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?

	Total
High School or less (NET)	38
Less than high school (grades 1-11, grade 12 but no diploma)	10
High school graduate or equivalent (e.g. GED)	28
Some college but no degree (incl. 2 year occupational or vocational programs)	28
College or post-graduate (NET)	33
College graduate (e.g. BA, AB, BS)	21
Postgraduate (e.g. MA, MS, MEng, Med, MSW, MBA, MD, DDs, PhD, JD, LLB, DVM)	12
Don't know/Refused	1

Q56. Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed or have you never been married?

	Total
Married	52
Living with partner	5
Divorced	9
Separated	3
Widowed	7
Never been married	23
Refused	1

Employment Table
Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total
Employed (NET)	63
Employed full time	51
Employed part time	13
Not employed (NET)	35
Retired	19
Housemaker	4
Student	2
Temporarily Unemployed	5
Disabled (vol)	5
Other (vol)	*
Don't know/Refused	2

PARTY. In politics today, do you consider yourself a (Republican), (Democrat), an Independent, or what?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Other/None	Don't know/ Refused
Total	25	31	33	7	4
Plan A	10	46	33	7	4
Plan B	10	47	33	6	4
Plan C	47	8	35	7	3

(Asked of those who consider themselves independent, other party, don't know or refused to say)

PARTYLEAN. Do you LEAN more towards the (Republican) Party or the (Democratic) Party?

Party/Partylean Combo Table

Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total	Plan A	Plan B	Plan C
Republican/Republican leaners	38	16	17	69
Democrat/Democratic leaners	49	72	69	16
Independent	8	7	10	8
Other party (Vol.)	1	-	*	1
Don't know/Refused	4	5	4	6

Q58. Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as...? (READ LIST)

	Very conservative	Somewhat conservative	Moderate	Somewhat liberal	Very liberal	Don't know/ Refused
Total	15	22	28	19	11	5
Plan A	6	13	26	27	23	5
Plan B	7	14	35	28	11	5
Plan C	25	38	26	5	2	4

Q59. Last year, that is in 2018, what was your total annual household income from all sources, BEFORE taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

Q59a. Could you tell me if your total annual household income is less than 50 thousand, 50 thousand but less than 100 thousand, or over 100 thousand dollars?

Q59b. Is that 100 to under 150 thousand, 150 to under 200 thousand, 200 to under 250 thousand, or 250 thousand dollars or more?

Q59/Q59a/Q59b Combo Table
Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005

	Total
Less than \$50,000 (NET)	43
Under \$15,000	11
\$15,000 to under \$20,000	6
\$20,000 to under \$25,000	6
\$25,000 to under \$35,000	8
\$35,000 to under \$50,000	10
Less than \$50,000 unspecified	2
\$50,000 but less than \$100,000 (NET)	26
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	14
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	12
\$50,000 but less than \$100,000 unspecified	1
Over \$100,000 (NET)	25
\$100,000 to under \$150,000	14
\$150,000 to under \$200,000	4
\$200,000 to under \$250,000	3
\$250,000 or more	3
Over \$100,000 unspecified	1
Don't know/Refused	6

**Self-Reported or Interviewer-Reported Gender
Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005**

	Male	Female	Other (Vol.)
Total	49	51	*

Q60a. Do you consider yourself to be heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or a different identity I haven't mentioned?

	Total
Straight/Heterosexual	88
LGBQ (NET)	6
Gay/Lesbian	2
Bisexual	4
Queer/Other	1
Don't know/Refused	6

Q60b. Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person who was raised male, but who identifies as female. Some people who do not identify as either male or female might also call themselves transgender. Do you consider yourself to be transgender?

	Yes, transgender	Yes, genderqueer or gender non- conforming	No	Don't know/ Refused
Total	1	*	96	2

**LGBTQ Identity Table
Based on Total Respondents; n=2,005**

	Total
LGBTQ	8
Cis and Straight	86
Don't know/Refused	6

X. Methodology

	Number of interviews (unweighted)	Margin of error at the 95% confidence level (%age points)	Weighted % of total sample
Total adults	2,005	+/-2.5	100
Preferred policy *			
Plan A: Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All.	618	+/-4.6	32
Plan B: Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works.	611	+/-4.7	28
Plan C: Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules.	550	+/-4.8	29
Half-sample A	994	+/-3.6	50
Half-sample B	1011	+/-3.6	50

*The remaining 11 percent of respondents favored none of the options or did not choose among them.

Definition of Preferred Policies

Q9. Currently there is a lot of discussion about what type of health insurance system the U.S. should have in the future. There are three proposals that are currently being discussed. Please tell me for each of the following whether you would support or oppose it. (First/Next), how about: (INSERT ITEM). Would you support or oppose this? (IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE: Would you strongly (support/oppose) or somewhat (support/oppose)?)

- Changing our health care system so that all Americans would get health insurance from Medicare, which is now mainly for people age 65 or over and is paid for by taxpayers. This plan is often called Medicare for All.
- Keeping the existing Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, and passing additional legislation to improve how it works.
- Replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with a new law that would give taxpayer funding to states to design their own health insurance systems with fewer federal rules.

(Asked of those who strongly support two or more proposals)

Q10. Of those (two/three) options you just said you STRONGLY supported, which ONE do you MOST prefer?

(Asked of those who don't strongly support any, but somewhat support two or more proposals)

Q11. Of those (two/three) options you just said you supported, which ONE do you MOST prefer?

How the Preferred Policy Option variable is constructed:

- If respondent supports only one strongly, code it for that option.
- If respondent supports more than one option strongly, ask which they support most (among the ones they strongly support) and code it for that option.
- If respondent does not support any strongly, but somewhat supports only one, code it for that option.
- If respondent does not strongly support any and somewhat supports more than one option, ask which they support most (among those they somewhat support) and code it for that option.

This creates three mutually exclusive groups of respondents: those who MOST prefer each of the three plans.