



UW Badger Poll™ #27, Release #2
University of Wisconsin Survey Center
University of Wisconsin Madison
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NOTE: When using material from this release please cite the UW Badger Poll™ conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Poll results compiled by Chad J. Kniss, Project Director, UW Survey Center. ckniss@ssc.wisc.edu (office phone: 608.262.4157)

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WISCONSIN RESIDENTS' OPINIONS ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

The latest Badger Poll asked Wisconsin residents about their opinions on the health care system in Wisconsin. A summary of the overall results is presented here.

- Overall, 48% of Wisconsinites say that they have mixed feelings about the health care system in the state today, with 31% saying they are dissatisfied with the system and 21% saying they are satisfied. However, when those with mixed feelings are asked if they lean more towards satisfied or dissatisfied, a large majority (59%) of Wisconsinites say they are more dissatisfied than satisfied with the health care system in the state.
- Approximately 53% of Wisconsin residents feel that the health care system in the state has major problems, 35% say it has minor problems, 9% say it is currently in a state of crisis and just 2% say there are no problems.
- **40%** of state residents said that the costs of health care are extremely problematic for the people of Wisconsin.
- Only 19% of Wisconsinites favored the state of Wisconsin doing nothing to change the current health care system, while 79% opposed doing nothing to change the system.
- **78%** favored expanding the eligibility of existing government programs such as BadgerCare and Medicaid to provide coverage for more people without health insurance.
- **63%** favored requiring every resident of Wisconsin to attain health insurance, either from their employer or another source, with government subsidies to low-income residents to help them pay for it
- **60%** of residents favored encouraging individuals to put money into tax-free health savings accounts to pay for regular health care bills, accompanied by a catastrophic insurance plan they must purchase for major medical bills.

- **55%** of residents favored replacing the current health care system with a new system administered entirely by state government that covers all Wisconsinites.
- When it comes to how responsible the State of Wisconsin and the Federal Government should be in making sure that all state residents have access to both high quality and affordable health care 49% said the State of Wisconsin should be extremely or quite responsible and 54% said the Federal Government should be extremely or quite responsible.
- Nearly two-thirds of Badger State residents think that the state of Wisconsin and the other states would do a better job reforming the health care system, while just over one-fourth think the federal government would do a better job.

The following tables show the results for each of the questions about health care that were included on the latest Badger Poll. Results on questions about the health care system in Wisconsin from the previous Badger Polls in April of 2008 and December of 2007 are included where applicable. See the appendix for exact wording of the questions.

Satisfaction with the Health Care System in Wisconsin			
	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007
Very Satisfied	10%	7%	5%
Somewhat Satisfied	11%	14%	10%
Mixed Feelings	48%	48%	56%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	10%	11%	11%
Very Dissatisfied	21%	18%	17%
Don't Know	<1%	1%	1%
Refused	<1%	<1%	<1%
(N)	538	521	507

Satisfaction with the Health Care System in Wisconsin (with leaners)	
	Oct. 2008
Very Satisfied	10%
Somewhat Satisfied	11%
Lean Toward Satisfied	19%
Mixed Feelings	1%
Lean Toward Dissatisfied	28%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	10%
Very Dissatisfied	21%
Don't Know	<1%
Refused	<1%
(N)	538

Description of the Health Care System in Wisconsin			
	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007
State of Crisis	9%	7%	12%
Major Problems	53%	45%	50%
Minor Problems	35%	44%	35%
No Problems	2%	2%	2%
Don't Know	1%	2%	2%
Refused	0%	0%	<1%
(N)	538	521	507

How Problematic are the Costs of Health Care for the People of Wisconsin?		
	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008
Extremely	40%	50%
Quite	36%	25%
Somewhat	14%	13%
Slightly	8%	7%
Not at All	1%	2%
Don't Know	1%	2%
Refused	0%	1%
(N)	538	521

Favor or Oppose a New System Administered by State Government			
	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007*
Strongly Favor	21%	25%	23%
Somewhat Favor	34%	36%	28%
Neither	2%	2%	1%
Somewhat Oppose	16%	14%	14%
Strongly Oppose	25%	21%	31%
Don't Know	2%	2%	2%
Refused	<1%	<1%	0%
(N)	538	521	507

* The December 2007 Badger Poll asked a similar question, with slightly different wording. See the appendix for the exact wording of both questions.

Favor or Oppose Expanding Eligibility of Existing Government Programs

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007
Strongly Favor	44%	38%	37%
Somewhat Favor	34%	38%	43%
Neither	1%	1%	1%
Somewhat Oppose	12%	12%	11%
Strongly Oppose	8%	9%	7%
Don't Know	1%	3%	1%
Refused	<1%	<1%	<1%
(N)	538	521	507

Favor or Oppose Requiring Every Resident to Have Health Insurance

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007
Strongly Favor	26%	30%	29%
Somewhat Favor	37%	35%	43%
Neither	1%	2%	1%
Somewhat Oppose	21%	17%	13%
Strongly Oppose	13%	14%	14%
Don't Know	1%	2%	1%
Refused	0%	0%	<1%
(N)	538	521	507

Favor or Oppose Encouraging Tax-free HSA's with Catastrophic Insurance to Help Pay Major Medical Bills

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008	Dec. 2007
Strongly Favor	16%	not asked	18%
Somewhat Favor	44%		43%
Neither	2%		1%
Somewhat Oppose	20%		18%
Strongly Oppose	15%		18%
Don't Know	2%		2%
Refused	<1%		<1%
(N)	538	not asked	507

Favor or Oppose the State of Wisconsin Doing Nothing to Change the Current Health Care System

	Oct. 2008
Strongly Favor	3%
Somewhat Favor	16%
Neither	1%
Somewhat Oppose	28%
Strongly Oppose	51%
Don't Know	1%
Refused	<1%
(N)	538

How responsible should the state of Wisconsin be in making sure that all state residents have access to both high quality and affordable health care?

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008
Extremely	24%	18%
Quite	25%	26%
Somewhat	33%	32%
Slightly	12%	17%
Not at All	6%	5%
Don't Know	<1%	1%
Refused	0%	0%
(N)	538	521

How responsible should the federal government be in making sure that all residents of Wisconsin have access to both high quality and affordable health care?

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008
Extremely	27%	27%
Quite	27%	28%
Somewhat	28%	27%
Slightly	9%	11%
Not at All	9%	7%
Don't Know	<1%	<1%
Refused	<1%	0%
(N)	538	521

**Who do you think would do a better job reforming
the health care system, Wisconsin and the other
states, or the federal government?**

	Oct. 2008	Apr. 2008
Wisconsin and Other States	65%	68%
Federal Government	27%	22%
Both Equally (vol.)	2%	2%
Neither (vol.)	3%	3%
Don't Know	2%	4%
Refused	<1%	<1%
(N)	538	521

APPENDIX:

How Problematic are the Costs of Health Care?

		Extremely	Quite	Some- what	Slightly	Not at all	Don't Know	Refused	(N)
Overall		40%	36%	14%	8%	1%	1%	--	(538)
Gender	Men	35%	38%	18%	7%	2%	1%	--	(246)
	Women	45%	35%	9%	9%	1%	1%	--	(292)
Party ID	Democrats	48%	35%	11%	5%	1%	<1%	--	(185)
	Independents & Others	40%	36%	11%	12%	<1%	1%	--	(210)
	Republicans	25%	40%	23%	9%	3%	1%	--	(133)
Age	18-29*	33%	42%	4%	21%	--	--	--	(27)
	30-44	36%	40%	16%	5%	2%	--	--	(110)
	45-59	46%	30%	19%	3%	1%	1%	--	(198)
	60 plus	42%	35%	12%	7%	2%	2%	--	(203)
Education	Never attended college	51%	22%	12%	12%	1%	1%	--	(206)
	Some college	34%	51%	10%	4%	<1%	1%	--	(153)
	College graduate	33%	38%	18%	8%	2%	--	--	(177)
Income	Under \$40,000	45%	35%	10%	8%	1%	1%	--	(181)
	\$40,000 to \$80,000	39%	36%	16%	9%	--	<1%	--	(176)
	Over \$80,000	35%	43%	15%	4%	3%	--	--	(123)

(*Caution should be taken when interpreting the findings of subgroups with smaller numbers of respondents due to the potential for larger variation.)

**How Responsible Should the Federal Government for Access to Wisconsinites
to High Quality & Affordable Health Care?**

		Extremely	Quite	Some- what	Slightly	Not at all	Don't Know	Refused	(N)
Overall		27%	27%	28%	9%	9%	<1%	<1%	(538)
Gender	Men	29%	26%	22%	10%	13%	<1%	--	(246)
	Women	26%	27%	34%	7%	6%	<1%	<1%	(292)
Party ID	Democrats	34%	35%	27%	2%	1%	1%	--	(185)
	Independents & Others	31%	25%	28%	7%	10%	--	--	(210)
	Republicans	11%	17%	29%	22%	21%	--	--	(133)
Age	18-29*	34%	32%	29%	--	5%	--	--	(27)
	30-44	32%	22%	25%	10%	11%	--	--	(110)
	45-59	23%	27%	27%	11%	12%	--	<1%	(198)
	60 plus	20%	27%	32%	12%	7%	1%	--	(203)
Education	Never attended college	36%	25%	24%	7%	8%	<1%	--	(206)
	Some college	26%	25%	31%	6%	11%	<1%	--	(153)
	College graduate	18%	29%	30%	13%	8%	--	<1%	(177)
Income	Under \$40,000	36%	31%	24%	3%	5%	<1%	<1%	(181)
	\$40,000 to \$80,000	26%	28%	24%	10%	12%	--	--	(176)
	Over \$80,000	15%	26%	35%	14%	10%	--	--	(123)

(*Caution should be taken when interpreting the findings of subgroups with smaller numbers of respondents due to the potential for larger variation.)

SURVEY QUESTION WORDING

- ECON10C How problematic are the costs of health care? (INT: IF NECESSARY “Is this not at all problematic, slightly problematic, somewhat problematic, quite problematic, or extremely problematic?)
- HCQ01 Now, I have a few questions for you about health care. Overall, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or do you have mixed feelings about the way the health care system is working in the State of Wisconsin?
- HCQ01B [NOTE: only asked if HCQ01 was satisfied or dissatisfied.] Would you say you are very [satisfied/dissatisfied] or are you only somewhat [satisfied/dissatisfied]?
- HCQ01C [NOTE: only asked if HCQ01 was mixed feelings] Overall, do you lean more toward being satisfied or dissatisfied?
- HCQ04 Which of these statements do you think best describes the health care system in Wisconsin today: it is in a state of crisis, it has major problems, it has minor problems, or it does not have any problems?
- HCQ03_intro A number of proposals have been made about ways to change the health care system in the State of Wisconsin. For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you strongly oppose it, somewhat oppose it, somewhat favor it, or strongly favor it (INTERVIEWER: PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE)

[NOTE: Questions HCQ03_A through HCQ03_D were randomly rotated]

- HCQ03_A2 [Note: Question Wording in 2008 Badger Polls #26 & #27] The state of Wisconsin should combine the resources currently being spent on health care by employers, individuals, state government, and insurance companies to create a new system run by the state government to cover all residents. (INT. IF NECESSARY: “Do you strongly oppose this, somewhat oppose this, somewhat favor this, or strongly favor this?”)
- HCQ03_A [Note: Question Wording for fall 2007 Badger Poll #25] What about consolidating all the money and resources now being spent by employers, individuals, the state government, and insurance companies to operate the current health insurance system and replace it with a new system, administered entirely by state government and covering all residents of Wisconsin?
- HCQ03_B How about expanding the eligibility of existing state health insurance programs such as BadgerCare, Medicaid, and Healthy Families, to provide coverage for more people without health insurance? (INT. IF NECESSARY: “Do you strongly oppose this, somewhat oppose this, somewhat favor this, or strongly favor this?”)
- HCQ03_C What about requiring every resident of Wisconsin to attain health insurance, either from their employer or another source, and offer government subsidies to low-income residents to help them pay for it? (INT. IF NECESSARY: “Do you oppose this strongly, oppose this somewhat, favor this somewhat or favor this strongly?”)
- HCQ03_D How about encouraging individuals to put money into a tax-free health savings account that they would use to pay for their regular health care bills and accompany this with a catastrophic insurance plan they must also purchase to help pay for major medical bills (INT. IF NECESSARY: “Do you oppose this strongly, oppose this somewhat, favor this somewhat or favor this strongly?”)

- HCQ03_F [NOTE: HCQ03F always asked after the four randomized questions above] What if the State of Wisconsin does nothing to change the current health care system? (INT. IF NECESSARY: "Do you oppose this strongly, oppose this somewhat, favor this somewhat or favor this strongly?")?
- HCQ07_A How responsible should the state of Wisconsin be in making sure that all state residents have access to **both** high quality and affordable health care? Would you say not at all responsible, slightly responsible, somewhat responsible, quite responsible, or extremely responsible?
- HCQ07_B How responsible should the federal government be in making sure that all residents of Wisconsin have access to **both** high quality and affordable health care? Would you say not at all responsible, slightly responsible, somewhat responsible, quite responsible, or extremely responsible?
- HCQ06 Who do you think would do a better job reforming the health care system, Wisconsin and the other states, or the federal government?

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin. The Director of the poll operations is Chad J. Kniss, UW Survey Center. The Faculty Director of the Poll content is Professor Katherine Cramer Walsh, Department of Political Science, UW-Madison. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

Results shown here are based on 538 persons who were randomly chosen within households with working landline telephone numbers and interviewed between October 21 and October 28, 2008, inclusive. During this time period, the UWSC made 10,688 phone calls to 2,002 telephone numbers. Additionally, advance letters describing the survey and its procedures was sent to 887 households whose randomly chosen telephone numbers were matched to a known listed address. The response rate for this survey was 38.1%, as defined by the American Association of Public Opinion Research Response Rate 3. Calls were made between 9AM and 9PM Monday through Friday and between 10AM and 5PM on Saturday and from 12 noon to 9PM on Sunday. All telephone numbers were randomly generated by computer. The UWSC made up to 10 attempts on each number in order to confirm if it was a residential number, select an eligible respondent and/or to convert first time refusals. Approximately 57.6% of the 538 interviews were completed in the first three days of calling.

Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every resident in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error". Results reported here are based on weighted data (weighted to reflect statewide gender and age groups).