

Western European and U.S. Adults: Tear Down this Health Care System!

Contributed by Harris Interactive
 Friday, 11 July 2008
 Last Updated Friday, 11 July 2008

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. – June 2, 2008 – A new Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey conducted online by Harris Interactive® among a total of 6,735 adults aged 16 to 64 within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, the United States, and adults aged 18 to 64 in Italy, between April 30 and May 14, 2008 finds that:

Majorities of the public in Spain (61%), Italy (61%), Great Britain (60%), Germany (54%) and the United States (50%) as well as a relative majority in France (43%) all believe that while there are some good things in their health care system, fundamental changes are needed to make it work better;

French adults seem to be the most "content" with their health care system as almost two in five (38%) believe their health care system works pretty well and only minor changes are needed;

Adults in the U.S., however, are the unhappiest as one-third of them (33%) say the health care system has so much wrong with it that it needs to be completely rebuilt.

There are some major reasons for the dissatisfaction of the health care systems in these countries.

Strong majorities in all six countries agree with the idea that the standards of care and treatment in the public health care system are declining. (between 80% in Germany and 57% in Spain);

Along with the standards of care declining, even stronger majorities in all six countries agree that costs of care and treatment in the public health care system in their country are rising too fast (between 89% in the U.S. and 58% in Spain);

Germans appear to be the most unhappy as half strongly agree that care is declining (50%) and over three in five strongly agree that costs are rising too fast (63%).

Where there is not a sense of agreement in these six countries is if the health care system in their country is meeting their needs and expectations:

A majority in adults in France (55%) and just under half of Spaniards (48%) do agree that the system is meeting their needs;

Adults in Great Britain are more divided – over two in five (42%) say the system is not meeting their needs, while just under that (38%) say the system is meeting their needs;

Strong majorities of adults in Germany (72%), Italy (67%), and the U.S. (62%), however, believe that their public health care systems are not meeting their needs and expectations.

So What?

Since health care touches all people, it is a subject about which people are passionate. Regardless of country, people want basic health care provided to them and they expect the public health care system to provide both good care and care at a reasonable cost. This is not what they think they are currently getting and it is an issue politicians in these six countries, if not many more, do need to address.