Lesbians And Gay Men Show Broad Support For Health Care Reform

Contributed by Harris Interactive
Friday, 04 June 2010

8 of 10 Support New Health Care Law; 9 of 10 Also Favor Health Carriers that Include Employer-Offered Domestic Partner Coverage

In a national survey following President Obama's signature on the final health care reform legislation, 46% of all Americans expressed support for the plan (with 54% opposed).

That measure of support, however, escalates sharply among gay men and lesbians, 79% of whom say they either strongly support or somewhat support President Obama's plan for health care reform.
60% of all LGBT adults also express support for the new reforms.

When asked about their own health benefits coverage, 85% of all heterosexuals report they are insured, while three-quarters (77%) of LGBT adults also report they have health insurance today.

Among gay men and lesbians specifically, 8 out of 10 (81%) state they currently have health insurance coverage although this statistic drops markedly for lesbians (73%) and bisexual adults (68%). [Please note that the smaller number of transgender adults taking part in the survey regrettably were insufficient to draw valid conclusions.]

Nearly half of all Americans (47%) say their insurance coverage is through their employer including 51% of LGBT adults. One out of ten heterosexual respondents (10%) and LGBT adults (9%) alike report they are covered through their spouse or partner's health insurance policy.

The national survey of 2,918 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 325 self identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender, was conducted online between April 12 and 19, 2010, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market.

When asked about factors to consider when choosing among private health care carriers, unsurprisingly 92% of gay men and lesbians (82% of LGBT adults) say that it is important that their health insurance carrier provide domestic partner coverage products in employer-offered plans.

Similar proportions â€“ 92% of gay men and lesbians, and 80% of LGBT adults â€“ also agree that it is important that health insurance carriers offer their own employees access to domestic partner health benefits for same-sex couples.

However, only 12% of LGBT adults (and 8% of gay men and lesbians) report that they are "aware" of any health insurance provider that currently markets (or has marketed) products to the LGBT community specifically-something gay men and lesbians would like to see more of.

Over 8 in 10 (81%) of gays and lesbians feel that it is important to see print advertisements for health care carriers with information specifically intended for them as customers, including same-sex couple imagery and tailored messages.

Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications, noted, "We have long seen evidence of health disparities across the entire LGBT population, particularly among lesbians, bisexual women and transgender adults.

These findings appear to underscore the priority that many LGBT Americans give to affordable access to quality health care â€“ and may help explain, in part, why support for national health care reform is unusually deep."

Witeck added that the survey outcomes contain equally important data for health insurance companies and employers too: "LGBT consumers, including same-sex couples and families, are eager for meaningful information, along with relevant products, services and opportunities that speak to them directly, respectfully and consistently. They wonder also why more companies including health carriers seem reticent to reach out to them in more direct and inclusive ways."

Methodology
Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between April 12 and 19, 2010, among 2,918 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 325 self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. We over-sampled gay men and lesbians in order to allow for more detailed analysis of these groups.

Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys.

The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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May 2010