

Poll: Employers should pay for health care

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Nearly eight in 10 California voters favor employers either providing employees' health coverage or pay into a state fund that would, a poll said.

Seventy-eight percent of those surveyed supported an employer mandate to provide health coverage, the San Jose (Calif) Mercury New said. The statewide Field Poll survey results came as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislators pledge to give expanding health care top priority.

The move is backed by leading Democrats and opposed by business interests. Schwarzenegger indicated he may rethink his long-held opposition to employer mandates.

More than 75 percent of the voters polled backed expanding state health care programs for low-income people so more families can qualify, the survey said. Voters also preferred, by a 52 percent to 24 percent margin, building on the current system of employer-based health coverage rather than creating a state-run system.

Survey participants were nearly evenly split on the question of a single-payer, government-operated health care system for everyone, with 47 percent for the plan and 49 percent against it.

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