

IU national survey finds majority of Americans believe 'myths' about health care reform

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Do Americans believe controversial assertions about health care reform including death panels, threats to Medicare, abortions, illegal immigrants, and other claims which the White House have labeled as untrue "myths?"

Findings from a national survey of Americans by researchers from Indiana University Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research (CHPPR) and the Indiana University Center for Bioethics says that Americans do believe the "myths" about [health care](#) reform, confirming that the White House may indeed be losing this battle.

"A surprisingly large proportion of Americans believe what the White House has dubbed 'myths' about health care reform," said CHPPR director Aaron Carroll, M.D., M.S. "Ironically, we found that the least believed myths, such as those related to mandatory end-of-life decisions and euthanasia counseling, are those that have gained the most traction in the media and have resulted in changes to the House bill."

From Aug. 14 -18, a random sample of 600 Americans in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia were asked 19 questions about their [personal beliefs](#) concerning [health insurance reform](#) assertions. A majority believed most of these statements to be true, with an overwhelming number of Republicans and -- for many issues -- Independents finding truth in the controversial assertions.

Who and what types of services will be covered if the proposed reforms are passed:

67 percent of Americans believe that wait times for health care services (such as surgery) will increase (91 percent of Republicans, 37 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of Independents).

Roughly 6 out of 10 Americans believe that taxpayers will be required to pay for abortions (78 percent of Republicans, 30 percent of Democrats, 58 percent of Independents)

46 percent believe that reforms will result in health care coverage for all illegal immigrants (66 percent of Republicans, 29 percent of Democrats, 43 percent of Independents).

Level of government involvement with health care if the proposed reforms pass:

5 out 10 believe the federal government will become directly involved in making personal health care decisions (80 percent of Republicans, 25 percent of Democrats, 56 percent of Independents)

However only 3 out of 10 Americans believe that the government will require the elderly to make decisions about how and when they will die (53 percent of Republicans, 14 percent of Democrats, 31 percent of Independents) - a topic that has received a considerable amount of media attention.

Impact on current health [insurance coverage](#) if the proposed reforms are passed:

Interestingly, fewer people surveyed believe statements regarding the impact of proposed reforms on current health insurance coverage.

Only 29 percent of respondents believe that private insurance coverage would be eliminated (44 percent of Republicans, 11 percent of Democrats, 33 percent of Independents) and only 33 percent believed

that reforms would result in the elimination of employer-sponsored health insurance coverage (56 percent of Republicans, 14 percent of Democrats, 31 percent of Independents).

Additionally, only 36 percent of Americans believes that a public insurance option will put private insurance companies out of business (56 percent of Republicans, 18 percent of Democrats, 35 percent of Independents).

Costs of the proposed reforms and how the reforms will be paid for:

Almost 6 out of 10 Americans believe that a public insurance option as proposed would be too expensive for the United States to afford (84 percent of Republicans, 27 percent of Democrats, 58 percent of Independents).

51 percent believe that the public insurance option will increase health care costs (79 percent of Republicans, 21 percent of Democrats, 53 percent of Independents), and 54 percent believe that the public option will increase premiums for Americans with private health insurance (78 percent of Republicans, 28 percent of Democrats, 58 percent of Independents).

5 out of 10 Americans think that cuts will be made to Medicare in order to cover more Americans (66 percent of Republicans, 37 percent of Democrats, 44 percent of Independents).

"It's perhaps not surprising that more Republicans believe these things than Democrats," said Dr. Carroll. "What is surprising is just how many Republicans - and Independents - believe them. If the White House hopes to convince the majority of Americans that they are misinformed about health care reform, there is much work to be done."

A full report on the survey can be found at:

chppr.iupui.edu/research/healthreformmyths.html

Source: Indiana University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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