

Health care reform 'important' even to those who want new law repealed

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Fifty-eight percent of Americans (96 percent of Republicans, 10 percent of Democrats and 54 percent of Independents) support repealing the health care reform legislation that was signed into law by President Barack Obama in March, according to a new national survey conducted April 6 - 10 by researchers from Indiana University's Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research (CHPPR).

Americans 18 to 34 years of age were most supportive of repealing the legislation with more than 70 percent supporting its repeal.

"This is somewhat surprising given that some of the most vocal opposition to reform in the past came from older Americans while younger individuals seemed less opposed," said Aaron Carroll, M.D., director of CHPPR. "While at first glance these findings may seem to tell a clear story, results from other portions of the survey demonstrate that the repeal question may be less about actual policy goals than previously thought," he added.

"Many have assumed that those advocating for repeal in polls wanted Congress to take no action on [health-care reform](#) until the law was abolished. However, we find that 48 percent of Americans actually are supportive of Congress continuing to work on [health care system](#) reforms as opposed to focusing on any other topic," said Dr. Carroll. "In fact, 51 percent of those who supported repealing the legislation also were in favor of Congress continuing to work on health care system reforms."

When asked how imperative they thought it was for Congress to work on "establishment of a public option that would give individuals a choice between government-provided [health insurance](#) or private health insurance" in the upcoming legislative session, 67 percent of Americans rated this as important.

This finding is even more striking given the fact that 59 percent of all those in favor of repeal rated the public option as important. Moreover, so did 67 percent of all [Republicans](#) and 59 percent of all Independents.

"It may be that the repeal question is more of a surrogate for whether people support the platform of the Republican party," said Dr. Carroll, "rather than how they want Congress to devote its time. Further work is needed to see if that is true."

CHPPR will be conducting a follow-up survey to try and answer this question.

In addition to gauging public support for the repeal of the health care legislation, the current survey also asked about areas on which [Congress](#) should focus in the upcoming legislative session. Respondents showed overwhelming support, regardless of political affiliation, for Congressional attention to federal deficit reduction (82 percent) as well as reform of financial system regulation (73 percent) in the upcoming legislative session. Falling lowest on the list of issues was addressing climate change, with only 32 percent of Americans finding this to be an issue of importance. Other topics polled included reforms to the pharmaceutical industry (60 percent), the medical malpractice system (55 percent), and immigration (54 percent).

More information: A full report on the survey can be found at chppr.iupui.edu/research/pealsurvey.html

Provided by Indiana University School of Medicine

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