

AMA's position on coverage expansion was inconsistent with the views of most physicians

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Researchers at Mount Sinai School of Medicine have found that the majority of physicians and members of the American Medical Association (AMA) opposed the AMA's position on coverage expansions--the most contentious issue in the recent health care reform debate. The data are published in a letter in the June 9th issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

In the 2009 [health care reform](#) debate, the AMA opposed Medicare expansions and proposed coverage of the uninsured primarily through private means. The researchers found that only 12.5 percent of all physicians and 14.2 percent of AMA members who participated in the survey supported the AMA's position on insurance coverage expansions. Salomeh Keyhani, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Health Policy, and Alex Federman, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, co-authored the study.

"Our survey indicates that most physicians and AMA members oppose the AMA's views on coverage expansions," said Dr. Keyhani. "The AMA is a highly visible organization that is presumed by many to represent physicians' opinions on various issues. However, there appears to be a discrepancy between the AMA's platform, the beliefs of its members and the views of physicians nationwide."

Mount Sinai researchers used the AMA Physician Masterfile to survey

5,157 physicians. The researchers secured a 43.2 percent response rate. There were no significant differences in response based on specialty, practice type, or geography. Physicians that were most supportive of the AMA's position were doctors of osteopathy (16.5 percent), physicians whose income was based on billing (16.1 percent), and physicians in rural areas (16 percent). The lowest level of support came from female physicians, with only 7.9 percent supporting the AMA's platform. Physicians who back the AMA's position were more likely to be younger, male practice owners in nonmedical or nonsurgical specialties such as anesthesiology, pathology, or radiology, fields that typically involve less patient interaction.

Respondents to the survey were asked to indicate their support on key issues, including the public option, expansion of health insurance through private means, and support for a proposal that would allow adults 55- to 64-years-old to buy into Medicare. [Physicians](#) were considered to be in support of the AMA's position if they agreed with private expansions only and opposed the expansion of Medicare.

Provided by The Mount Sinai Hospital

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