

Americans show strong support for mental health coverage

May 23 2017

Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, overwhelmingly feel that insurance should cover mental health. Seventy-seven percent of all Americans said private health insurance offered through an employer or union should cover mental health, including 76 percent of Democrats and 81 percent of Republicans. This is according to [a new national poll](#) released today by the American Psychiatric Association.

A majority of Americans (51%), feel that mental health should be covered by all types of insurance, including individually-purchased [health insurance](#), by insurance purchased through the Health Care Exchange or Marketplace, Medicaid and Medicare and other government provided sources (such as veteran's benefits). This includes 55% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans. Baby boomers are more likely than millennials to support mental health coverage.

While about half of respondents said that they have somewhat or very adequate mental health insurance coverage, more than a quarter do not know about their mental health coverage, and that number is fairly consistent regardless of age, income, race/ethnicity or party affiliation. Accessing [mental health care](#) is challenging for many—less than half of adults say they know how to access mental health care if they need it. Women are more likely (50 percent) than men (37 percent) to say they know how to access mental health care.

"This poll gives us some insight to American understanding of the importance of mental health and the strong bi-partisan support for

mental health coverage," said APA President Maria A. Oquendo, M.D., Ph.D. "However, the number of people who don't know how to access mental health care and don't know about their coverage raises concerns."

While Americans are concerned about their family's overall health, and four in five adults recognize the connection between mental and physical health, they do not believe policymakers in Washington think mental health is a priority. More than two-thirds (69 percent) think mental health is a low priority or not a priority among Washington policymakers.

"We've made progress in recent years with improving and expanding [mental health](#) coverage, but the American Health Care Act (AHCA) passed by the House will reverse much of that progress," said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A. "The AHCA will remove [insurance coverage](#) from millions of Americans and roll back Medicaid expansion that occurred under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), potentially reducing access to care for the 1.3 million Americans with serious mental illness and the 2.8 million Americans with substance use disorders."

These findings are from an American Psychiatric Association-sponsored poll conducted online using ORC International's CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. The surveys were collected from a nationally representative sample of 1,019 adults during the period April 20-23, 2017. The margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

Citation: Americans show strong support for mental health coverage (2017, May 23) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-americans-strong-mental-health-coverage.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.