New Poll: Majority of Voters Want Congress To Take Action To Lower Health Care Prices

There is broad support across the political spectrum for policymakers to take aggressive action to lower prices.

As health care costs place an increasing burden on consumers, businesses, and taxpayers, voters demand lawmakers take action to address the key driver of rising costs for the privately insured – the high prices paid for health care. A new survey shows a majority think it is very important for Congress to take action to lower health care prices. Voters from across the political spectrum express support for a range of policies to lower prices, including 78% who support government limits on the prices that hospitals can charge.

The survey was conducted by a bipartisan polling team – Guy Molyneux and Geoff Garin from Hart Research Associates and Bob Ward from Fabrizio Ward – and supported by Arnold Ventures. The findings echo results from a survey released by the Purchaser Business Group on Health and KFF in late April that showed top executives in large employer organizations think health care costs are excessive. A large majority of employers (85%) think a broader government role is necessary to contain health care costs and ensure coverage. The survey released today shows that the public shares similar sentiments.

A large majority of voters say reducing health care prices is one of the most important priorities for Congress to address.

- More than two-thirds of voters (67%) rank reducing health care costs as their top priority for the President and Congress. It topped other high priorities including investing in rebuilding infrastructure and providing support for small businesses.
- 90% of voters say it is important for this Congress to take action to reduce health care prices. 64% say it is very important, including nearly 4 out of 5 Biden voters (78%) and half of Trump voters (49%).
- By a wide majority, more voters (64%) are concerned that Congress won’t do enough to limit prices than are worried Congress will get involved in setting prices (36%).

There is broad support for policymakers to take aggressive action to lower prices.

- Voters broadly support government intervention to reduce health care prices, including:
  - Limiting the prices that hospitals facing little competition can charge (86%)
  - Offering all Americans a public health insurance option with limits on the prices charged by providers (71%)
  - Preventing hospitals from engaging in business tactics that reduce competition (81%)
- More than 3 in 4 voters (78%) support limiting the prices that hospitals can charge to no more than two times what Medicare pays.
  - Voters widely believed (63%) that limiting the prices hospitals can charge would lower health care costs for them.
  - Notably, limiting hospital prices has broad support across party lines with 82% of Democrats and 74% of Republicans supporting it. About 1 in every 3 Republicans express strong support.
When discussing limits on hospital prices, voters support multiple approaches including applying price limits to the hospitals that charge the highest prices in their market (82%) and hospitals that face little or no competition (81%).

- Nearly 7 in 10 voters think the prices that hospitals and doctors charge privately insured patients for medical services are too high relative to Medicare.
  - Fewer than 1 in 10 voters thought the much higher rates charged to people with private insurance were because Medicare payments are too low.
  - Over 90% of voters think setting a limit on what providers can charge at twice what Medicare pays is reasonable.