

NATIONAL REVIEW

Tradeoffs in Everything, Obamacare Edition

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You won't be surprised that when the cost of a good goes up, people have a tendency to buy less of it. That's true even for the goods they really like. And, as it turns out, it is also true for very popular components of the "Affordable" Care Act (ACA). That's what the latest Cato Poll conducted by Emily Ekins and her team finds. Commenting on her results, she notes that even support for the most popular provisions in the law collapses when consumers are encouraged to consider the tradeoffs in terms of cost and quality of care.

Here are the main results:

Most polling about the Affordable Care Act tends to ask about its benefits (i.e. community-rating) without associated costs. However, in our survey after asking about these benefits we then ask follow-up questions specifying a cost with the benefit.

We find that support for the ACA's community-rating provision flips from 63%-33% support to 66%-27% opposed if it limits access to medical tests and treatments. Opposition rises, but less dramatically if it causes premiums to increase with 55%-39% opposed.

Similarly for guaranteed-issue, support flips from 77%-20% support to 75%-20% opposed if it reduced health care quality. Opposition rises but less so if it raised taxes with 55%-40% opposed.

Support for the Dependent-coverage mandate also flips from 72%-25% support to 58%-38% opposed if it cost \$1,200 a year.

Moving forward, 55% of Americans say that more free-market competition among insurers, hospitals, and doctors is the "better way" to provide high-quality, affordable health coverage, 39% say more government management of these is what's needed.

The whole thing is [here](#). Lawmakers should take these results to heart before they rush to keep some provisions in the health-care law that may be popular (when people don't have to pay for them) but will inevitably affect the cost and quality of care.