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Poll Finds More Confidence About Paying For Health Care; Young Adults Most Supportive Of Reform

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Aug 31, 2009

A new survey finds growing confidence in Americans' ability to pay for health care costs. Meanwhile, young adults are the group most supportive of health reform.

A Thomson Reuters survey published Monday found that "fewer Americans are afraid that they will be unable to pay for healthcare services and fewer expect to postpone medical treatments due to costs" than earlier this year, [Reuters](#) reports. "Researchers found a steady increase in people's confidence about their ability to pay for healthcare services -- it rose 12 percent between March and July this year." In a statement, Gary Pickens, chief research officer for the Healthcare & Science business of Thomson Reuters, said "there is growing optimism among many healthcare consumers, but (there) also is a clear disparity in outlook between those with higher income levels who have insurance coverage and those who are uninsured. This gap needs to be an area of focus for healthcare professionals and policymakers." The results are based on a telephone survey of 3,000 households (Simao, 8/31).

[The Los Angeles Times](#) reports that young adults, who "account for 30% of the uninsured population," are "the group most supportive of Obama's plan—although quietly." Young adults are "least likely to be offered health insurance through employment benefits -- just 53% of working young adults are eligible for employer-based coverage. And since their incomes tend to be low, buying coverage on their own is usually too expensive." The health bills currently pending in Congress would require all Americans to buy health insurance, a provision that Michael Tanner, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, says would hurt young people most and force them "to subsidize the healthcare needs of older people without making health insurance more affordable for them," according to the Times.

But health economist Genevieve Kenney of the Urban Institute disagrees and says that "many more uninsured young adults stand to gain from healthcare reform than stand to lose." But young people, who heavily favored Obama in the presidential election, have "been silent and, some say, put off as it watches the healthcare debate." Rock the Vote spokesman Thomas Bates explains that "the hyper-partisan spectacles of the town hall meetings, which got so much media attention, are just not an attractive venue for young people" (Geiger, 8/30).

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