

ONE NATION HEALTH

“Universal” vs. “Government-run” Health Care

Conclusion: Americans like the concept of universality (i.e. everyone getting great care) but they are leery of “government-run” health care.

Evidence: In 1994, Gallup showed 69 percent support for universal health insurance. But they also found that a majority of Americans were more concerned about government involvement than about not obtaining universal coverage.

Public More Concerned About:			
	Government control	No guarantee of universal coverage	No opinion
1994 Aug. 8-9	53%	40	7

In 2003, Gallup conducted the same poll. Their conclusion: When reminded that the current system leaves some people with no insurance – and when also told that a new government-run health insurance system would cover everyone and be like the Medicare system – Americans said they preferred the government system, by a 62 percent to 32 percent margin.

But when offered a simple choice between the current system, based mostly on private health insurance, or a government-run system, **Americans rejected the government system by a margin of 57 percent to 38 percent.** These figures represent a 49-point swing in opinion – from a 30-point margin in favor, to a 19-point margin opposed.

Why such a massive swing?

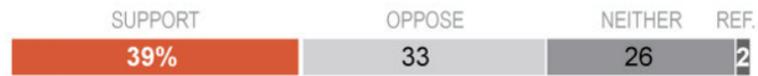
The key appears to be conflicting feelings Americans have about a new universal health insurance system run by the government. They strongly favor the universal part, but balk at government participation.

In 2016, Gallup asked the questions again. Their conclusions: “A slim plurality of 39 percent supports replacing the private health insurance system with a single government-run, taxpayer-funded plan that would cover medical, dental, vision and long-term care, with 33 percent opposed.”

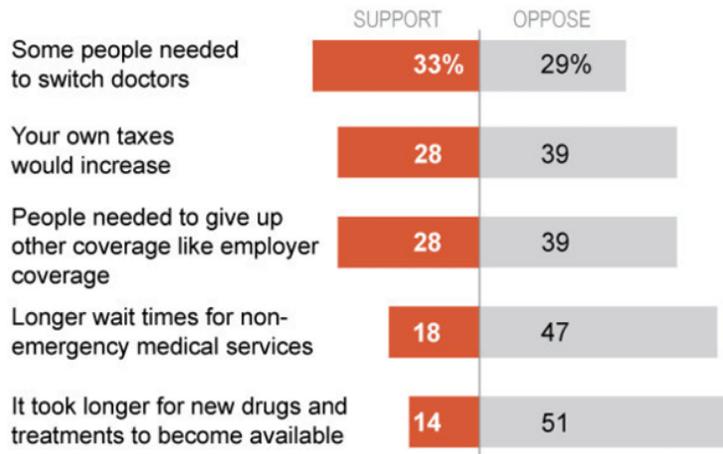
But when confronted with the policy details support melted...

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39 percent said they would support replacing the current private health insurance system with a single-payer, Medicare-like plan.



But among supporters, fewer were inclined to support a plan if it meant:



In 2016, a Kaiser Family Foundation Poll came to a similar conclusion:

36 percent felt "very positively" about "Medicare for All" but only 15 percent felt that way about "single payer."

Applications:

- Our policy and messaging should emphasize universality. We want everyone to have great care just as we want everyone to have a great job – without putting the government in charge.
- The policy details work in our favor more than defenders of the status quo but our details will resonate more effectively within a "universality" narrative.
- Reformers believe policies that empower individuals and families will provide better care to more people than policies that empower the government (aside: the goal is care not mere insurance).