

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Survey: Healthcare Reform Is a Top Priority for Small Businesses

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation research released in December 2008 confirms earlier Small Business Majority findings: healthcare is a top concern for small businesses, they want government to address the problem, and they're open to a range of solutions.

Healthcare costs are the No. 1 small-business concern.

Asked to name the one or two most important issues facing their business today, survey respondents cited healthcare costs most often:

- Healthcare costs: 78%
- Fuel/energy costs: 70%
- Weak economy: 55%

Only 19 percent cited taxes.

Small businesses are being pushed out of the health insurance market.

- More than one in three small businesses (36%) say that they are likely to cut some portion of employee health insurance benefits due to rising costs.

Small businesses want government to act.

- Asked what the new president and Congress should do first to grow business and jobs, small businesses ranked "making health care more affordable" at the top of a list of options.

Small businesses are open to a range of solutions.

- More than three in four (78%) say they would support a reform package that combines government-sponsored purchasing pools allowing small businesses to buy insurance at bulk rates with tax credits to make it more affordable. A majority (53%) would support this package even if it requires employers with 10 or more employees that do not offer health coverage to pay 4% of their payroll to help cover the uninsured.
- Two in three (68%) would support a market-based approach that gives employees tax credits to purchase portable, private health insurance; encourages use of health savings accounts; and includes tort reform for medical liability lawsuits.
- A majority (53%) would support an approach requiring that at least one public and one private plan be offered to all employees, and that insurance companies provide coverage regardless of age or pre-existing conditions. The approach would be paid for by repealing tax cuts for people with annual incomes of \$250,000 or more.

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About this research: On behalf of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Public Opinion Strategies and Lake Research Partners conducted a national telephone survey of 400 owners, CEOs, and presidents of businesses with 2-50 employees that pay for at least some portion of their employees' health insurance. The survey was conducted June 26-July 30, 2008.