

New Mexico Survey: Small Businesses Need Healthcare Reform

New Mexico small businesses are struggling to afford healthcare coverage.

- Just one in four small businesses (24%) in New Mexico currently provides healthcare benefits for employees, though 83% of business owners have coverage for themselves.
- Those who don't provide coverage to employees overwhelmingly say they can't afford to (76%), while those who do say they're really struggling to pay for it (79%). Still, a majority agrees that the company has a responsibility to offer the coverage.

Small business owners believe the healthcare system isn't working.

- A majority of small businesses wants significant health care reform. While they're divided on the best approach, only 11% feel that the healthcare system in New Mexico should be left as is.
- 64% believe we need healthcare reform now to get the economy back on track.

Health status, preexisting conditions should not be barriers.

- Small business owners strongly support the reform principle that people should be able to buy healthcare policies regardless of their health status; 76% agree.
- A majority (53%) agrees that more people would become entrepreneurs if they knew they could get healthcare regardless of preexisting conditions.

Small businesses believe in shared responsibility.

- 66% of small businesses in New Mexico support a principle of "shared responsibility" among individuals, employers, insurance companies, providers, and government for financing affordable health coverage.
- 59% believe employers should contribute something to cover their employees; only 24% don't think they should have to contribute.
- When asked if they would support expanded access to affordable, high-quality healthcare for all New Mexicans even if it meant an increase in taxes, 45% agreed and 52% disagreed.

About this research: This was a telephone survey of 300 randomly selected small business owners in New Mexico. It was carried out by Lake Research Partners in December 2008. The survey was commissioned by Health Action New Mexico, AARP New Mexico, and Small Business Majority. It has a 5.7% margin of error.