Latest FAU Poll Finds It’s Harder for Hispanics to Afford Healthcare but More Covered Since Obamacare Enacted

Majority Still Have Favorable View of Obamacare

BOCA RATON, Fla. (May 6, 2016) – An increasing number of Hispanics are finding it harder to afford healthcare and the percentage of those without any health insurance is up slightly over a year ago, but a majority still have a favorable view of the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare) and for the first time more women are insured than men, according to a new survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative (FAU BEPI).

More than 43 percent of respondents in the April poll said it is harder for them to afford healthcare, up almost 6 percentage points from a similar survey in March 2015. Only 13.7 percent said it was easier, down more than 9 percent from last year. Those saying they had no health insurance increased 5 percent, from 7.8 percent in March 2015 to 12.8 percent last month.

However, Hispanics have still benefited overall since the enactment of the ACA, resulting in 4 million adults gaining coverage, according to the Department of Health & Human Services’ March 2016 report.

According to the BEPI survey, it appears Hispanic women are increasing their access to health insurance through the ACA with 52 percent of females saying they have government healthcare coverage compared to only 23.3 percent of males. For the first time since BEPI’s healthcare survey of Hispanics was initially taken in September 2014, the number of females with no health insurance (11.2 percent) was lower than males (14.4 percent).

An analysis published in late 2015 by consulting firm McKinsey & Company found premiums for the lowest-cost ACA plans are expected to increase by a median of 10-13 percent in 2016. The report also found that more than half of the government-sponsored nonprofit insurance co-ops have now failed, leaving more than 750,000 families and individuals scrambling for new health insurance.
“The increased healthcare costs compared to last year is probably making it harder for Hispanics to afford health insurance,” said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of the BEPI. “The same applies to the increase in the number of uninsured.”

Political partisanship appeared to play a part in influencing respondents’ opinions on healthcare topics. Republicans and Independents were significantly more likely (50 and 53 percent, respectively) to think it was harder to afford health insurance as compared with Democrats (41 percent).

Overall, 51 percent of Hispanics gave Obamacare a favorable rating, compared with 35 percent unfavorable. Among Republicans, Obamacare scored 42 percent favorable and 46 percent unfavorable, while Democrats gave it 54 percent favorable and 30 percent unfavorable and Independents gave it the most positive rating at 60 percent favorable and 37 percent unfavorable.

“Despite increasing cost pressures, Hispanics are benefiting from the new provisions and consumer protections established by the Affordable Care Act,” Escaleras said. “The politics of health care reform is an important issue in this election cycle. Candidates should consider that repealing the law would result in taking away something tangible for a large and growing group of voters.”

The poll was conducted nationally April 1-30. The polling sample consisted of 500 Hispanics with a margin of error of +/- 4.33 percent and a 95 percent confidence level.

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