

Single-Payer Fans Outnumber Foes in Physician Survey

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There's more evidence that the idea of a single-payer healthcare system is gaining a critical mass of support in the medical profession.

A new survey issued today by the recruiting firm Merritt Hawkins shows that 42% of physicians strongly favor a single-payer system, with another 14% saying that they are somewhat supportive. In contrast, the idea is strongly opposed by 35% of physicians and somewhat opposed by 6%. Another 3% are neutral.

Roughly 1000 physicians completed the email survey, sent to 70,000 physicians nationwide this month.

The findings represent a reversal of a 2008 Merritt Hawkins survey in which 58% of physicians opposed a single-payer system while 42% were in support.

"Physicians appear to have evolved on single payer," said Travis Singleton, the senior vice president of Merritt Hawkins, in a news release. "Whether they are enthusiastic about it, are merely resigned to it, or are just seeking clarity, single payer is a concept many physicians appear to be embracing."

In a single-payer system, the government foots the bill for everyone's care, and patients can go to the medical practice or hospital of their choice. Healthcare providers would remain largely in the private sector as they are now. The arrangement gets nicknamed "Medicare for all."

What Merritt Hawkins discovered about physician attitudes toward single payer corroborates another recent [survey](#). Forty-eight percent of more than 500 physicians who completed a LinkedIn poll in February supported switching to single payer. Thirty-two percent opposed that move, while 21% weren't sure.

Public support of a single-payer system also is growing. According to a June survey by the Pew Research Center, 60% of Americans believe that the government should ensure that everyone has healthcare coverage. The percentage who believe that the government should fulfil this responsibility through a single-payer system grew from 28% in January to 33% in June.

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